

A *Gal 10 Ec*
COLLECTION
OF
THEOLOGICAL TRACTS,
IN SIX VOLUMES.

By RICHARD WATSON, D.D. F.R.S. *K*
LORD BISHOP *of* LANDAFF,
AND
REGIUS PROFESSOR *of* DIVINITY *in the* UNIVERSITY *of*,
CAMBRIDGE.

SECOND EDITION.

VOL. I.

L O N D O N:

Printed for T. EVANS in the Strand, and in the Great Market, Bury St.
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M.DCC.XCI.

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By RICHARD D.D. F.R.S.
Fellow of the Royal Society

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VOLUME I

LONDON

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W. Evans

this publication is—the protecting Youth from Indis-
 cipline—I cannot do the Public a greater service than by
 requesting Your Majesty to give it your protection.

TO THE

QUEEN.

The interests of civil Society require that we should
 pay deference to persons of *rank*, even though they be
 not so to be persons of *rank*. This is a principle
 and confirmed deference; it is paid with reluctance
 and is both in kind and extent wholly unlike that which
 all good Citizens are anxious of showing to *rank*.
 Majesty. My character has hitherto I trust, never been
 esteemed that of a flatterer; nor do I fear the applau-
 tion of it, in saying, That to Your Majesty's rank
 alone I would not have given this mark, were it
 as it may seem, of my Veneration and Respect.

MADAM,

NO original work of mine could possibly have been
 so deserving of Your Majesty's attention, as this
 Collection of other men's labours undoubtedly is. Our
 Infancy is indebted to that Sex of which Your Majesty
 is the highest Ornament, for the first principles of
 Religious Education; and as one of the main objects of

DEDICATION.

this publication is—the preserving Youth from Infidelity—I cannot do the Public a greater service than by requesting Your Majesty to give it your protection.

The interests of civil Society require that we should pay deference to persons of Rank, even though they happen not to be persons of Merit. But this is a limited and constrained deference; it is paid with reluctance; and is both in kind and extent wholly unlike that which all good Citizens are ambitious of shewing to Your Majesty. My character has hitherto, I trust, never been esteemed that of a Flatterer; nor do I fear the imputation of it, in saying, That to Your Majesty's Rank alone I would not have given even this mark, worthless as it may seem, of my Veneration and Respect.

I verily believe Your Majesty to be one of the best Wives, and one of the best Mothers, in England. The Time is approaching,—distant may it be! when the recollection of the example which You have shewn to Women of every Rank, in these great points of female Duty (the greatest on which Women of the highest Rank ought to build their worth of character), will give Your Majesty far more comfort than I can possibly describe; but not more than I, in conjunction with
Thousanda

DEDICATION.

Thousands in every part of the Kingdom, heartily wish
and pray Your Majesty may at all times, and especially
at that time, enjoy.

I am,

MADAM,

With the greatest and most sincere Respect,

Your MAJESTY's

Most obedient Servant,

RICHARD LANDAFF.

C O N T E N T S

OF THE

F I R S T V O L U M E.

A Scheme of Scripture-Divinity, formed upon the Plan of the Divine Dispensations. With a Vindication of the Sacred Writings. By J. TAYLOR, D. D. Lond. 1762. p. 4.

This Book deserves to be generally known; it has been for some Years out of Print, and much sought after by the Clergy: I thought I should do them an acceptable Service in making it a part of this Collection.

Reflexions upon the Books of the Holy Scripture, to establish the Truth of the Christian Religion. In two Volumes. Lond. 1688. By P. ALLIX. p. 220.

These two Volumes were published in French, the First in London, and the Second at Amsterdam, much about the same Time that they made their Appearance in English. They were spoken of with Respect in the *Acta Eruditorum* for 1688; were translated into German at Nuremberg in 1702: and have been always held in great Repute for the Plainness and Erudition with which they are written. The Author was a French Refugee of distinguished Learning and Integrity; the Reader will meet with a good Account of his Life and Writings in the *Biographia Britannica*.

P R E F A C E.

IN publishing this Collection of Theological Tracts I have had no other end in view, but to afford young persons of every denomination, and especially to afford the Students in the Universities, and the younger Clergy, an easy opportunity of becoming better acquainted with the grounds and principles of the Christian Religion than, there is reason to apprehend, many of them at present are. My first intention was to have admitted into the Collection, such small tracts only in Latin or English, on Theological Subjects, as had sunk into unmerited oblivion; but, on maturer reflexion, I thought it better to consult the general utility of the younger and less informed Clergy, than to aim at gratifying the curiosity, or improving the understanding, of those who were more advanced in years and knowledge. Instead therefore of confining myself to single tracts, I have not scrupled to publish some entire books; but they are books of such acknowledged worth, that no Clergyman ought to be unacquainted with their contents; and by making them a part of this Collection, they may chance to engage the attention of many who would otherwise have overlooked them. It would have been an easy matter to have laid down an exten sive plan of study for young Divines, and to have made a great shew of learning by introducing into it a Systematic Arrangement of Historians, Critics, and Commentators, who, in different ages and in different languages, have employed their talents on Theological Subjects. But there is a fashion in study as in other pursuits; and the taste of the present age is not calculated for the making great exertions in Theological Criticism and Philology. I do not consider the Tracts which are here published as sufficient to make what is called a deep Divine, but they will go a great way towards making, what is of more worth—a well-informed Christian. In Divinity, perhaps, more than

in any other science, it may be reckoned a virtue *aliqua nescire*; for what Quintilian observes of historical, is certainly very applicable to an abundance of Theological writings.—*Persequi quidem quod quisque umquam vel contemptissimorum hominum dixerit, aut nimie miserie, aut inanis jactantie est; et detinet atque obruit Ingenia, melius aliis vacatura.*

If any thing can revive a sense of Religion in the higher classes of life; preserve what still remains of it amongst men of middling fortunes; and bring back to decency of manners and the fear of God, the lowest of the people; it must be—the Zeal of the Clergy. But Zeal, in order to produce its proper effect, must be founded in knowledge: it will otherwise (where, from some peculiar temperament of body or mind, it happens to exist at all) be unsteady in its operation; it will be counteracted by the prejudices of the world, the suggestions of self-interest, the importunities of indolent habits; or it will be tainted by Fanaticism, and instead of producing in every individual sober thoughts of his Christian duty, it will hurry into dangerous errors the ignorant and unthinking, and excite the abhorrence or derision of men of sense. I have therefore, in selecting the works which compose this publication, not so much attended to the discussion of particular doctrines, as to the general arguments which are best adapted to produce in the Clergy, and in others who will consider them, a well-grounded persuasion that Christianity is not a *cunningly devised fable*, but the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. That Clergyman who is a Christian, not because he happens to have been born in a Christian country, but from rational conviction, will never think himself at liberty to make light of his calling; to suit his instructions to the vicious propensities of his audience; to scandalize his profession by a conformity with the ungodly fashions of the world; to be ashamed of the Cross of Christ, though he should see it attacked by the subtlety of Sophists, or ridiculed by the wanton audacity of profane men. A deficiency of Zeal indeed in religious concerns does not always proceed, either in the Clergy or Laity, from a want of Knowledge: sensual appetites, ungoverned passions, worldly customs, all combine together in making most men languid in the performance of even clear and acknowledged duties; yet it must be confessed, that a firm belief in the truth of Christianity resulting from a comprehensive view of the proofs by which it is established, is the most probable mean of producing in all men integrity of life; and of animating, especially, the Ministers of the Gospel, to a zealous and discreet discharge of their pastoral functions.

Young

Young men who are ordained from Country Schools are frequently, when settled in their Curacies, at a loss what course of studies to pursue: and many of them, as well as many of those who have had the benefit of an University-Education, are unhappily in no condition to expend much money in the purchase of Theological books, even if they knew how to make a proper selection. Both these difficulties are, I hope, in some degree obviated by this publication; which contains nearly as much matter as three times the number of ordinary volumes of the same size; and the matter itself has been taken from Authors of such established reputation, that he who will take the pains to read and digest what is here offered to him, will have acquired no inconsiderable knowledge in Divinity. But in Divinity, as in every other study, a man must think much for himself; those who have gone before in the same pursuit may point out the road to him, but that is the main good they can do him: if he loiters in his progress, waiting for the vigilance of others to push him on, he will never get to his journey's end. The Lectures of Professors and Tutors are doubtless of great use in every science; but their use does not consist so much in rendering the science intelligible, if we except the first Elements of the abstract Sciences, as in directing the attention of the Students to the best books on every subject; and if to this they add a frequent examination into the progress which the Students have made, they will have done all that reasonably can be expected from them. The Republic of Letters is in very different circumstances in the present age from what it was three centuries ago: the multiplicity of books which, in the course of that period, have been published in every Art and Science, has enlarged the boundaries of knowledge, and given every man an opportunity, if he be not wanting to himself, of becoming skilled in that branch of Literature which he shall think fit to cultivate. And to speak the truth, though there may be some dark points in Divinity which the labour of Learning may still illustrate, yet new books are not so much wanted in that Science, as inclination in the younger Clergy to explore the treasures of the old ones.

A young man destined to the Church, who thinks that he has completed his Education as soon as he has taken his first degree in Arts, and quitted the walls of his College, is under a very great mistake. His memory may have been stocked with a great abundance of Classical Knowledge; his mind may have been expanded by a general acquaintance with the several branches of Natural Philosophy; his reasoning faculties may have been

strengthened by Mathematical Researches; the limits of his understanding may have been in some degree ascertained by the study of Natural Religion; in a word, he may have been admirably fitted to become a Divine: but if, after this preparation, he stops short, giving himself up to rural amusements, mispending his time in idle avocations, blunting his faculties by sensual indulgencies, indolently or arrogantly acquiescing in the knowledge he has acquired, he will never be one.

I am far from wishing to divert the attention of the Undergraduates from that course of studies which is established in this place. There is no University, I believe, in Europe, where the degree of Bachelor of Arts is more honourably obtained than in the University of Cambridge: the sedulity with which the young men, in general, pursue the plan of study which is prescribed to them, is highly commendable; and, if I recommend it to them to let Theology make a part of that plan, it is not from an opinion that Theological studies are more proper for their time of life than any of those in which they are engaged; but from an apprehension, that if they do not make some progress in Divinity, during the first years of their Academical Education, they will have no opportunity of doing it before they will be placed in situations which require a great proficiency in it. The Statutes indeed of the University, and of many private Colleges, though they point out Theology as the ultimate End of all our studies, do not order us to study Divinity till we have studied almost every other branch of Science: but it ought to be remembered that, at the time these Statutes were made, young men were admitted into the University about the age of fourteen; and consequently commencing Masters of Arts about the age of twenty-one, they had a considerable interval, even after taking their second degree in Arts, in which they might prepare themselves for entering into holy Orders.

It is not the reading many books which makes a man a Divine, but the reading a few of the best books often over, and with attention; those at least who are beginning their Theological studies should follow this rule. I have no scruple therefore in recommending it to the Students in the Universities, to read this Collection twice or thrice over before they take their first degree; the doing this will give little interruption to their other studies; and if it should give a great deal, their time will not be misemployed. Let them dedicate a small portion of every day, or the whole of every Sunday, to this occupation; and, in the course of three or four years, they will easily accomplish the task; and, when
it

it is accomplished, they may offer themselves to the Bishops to be ordained, with a becoming confidence that they are not wholly unprepared; and they may undertake the most important of all human Duties—the Cure of Souls—without being alarmed by a consciousness of their inability to discharge it as becometh *the servants of the most high God*. When I thus express myself concerning the fruits which may be expected from the course of study here pointed out, I am far from insinuating, that it will supersede the necessity of studying the Scriptures themselves, with the best assistance which can be obtained from Commentators: on the contrary, I am persuaded that one part of Scripture is best interpreted by another, and that no sort of reading can contribute so much to the producing of a steady faith, a rational piety, a true Christian charity of mind (the great ends of all our studies, and all our pursuits!) as the frequent reading of the Scriptures.

But the students who are designed for the Church, are not the only ones to whom I would recommend the practice of setting apart some portion of their time for religious inquiries; I would press it with the greatest earnestness and sincerity on the young men of rank and fortune. I would especially intreat them to peruse with unprejudiced minds, the whole of this Collection; but particularly, and with the strictest attention, the First, Fourth, and Fifth Volumes of it: they will there find such convincing proofs of the Christian Religion, as will preserve them, I trust, from that contagion of infidelity which is the disgrace of the age. It is a very wonderful thing, that a being such as man, placed on a little globe of earth, in a little corner of the universe, cut off from all communication with the other systems which are dispersed through the immensity of space, imprisoned as it were on the spot where he happens to be born, almost utterly ignorant of the variety of spiritual existences, and circumscribed in his knowledge of material things, by their remoteness, magnitude, or minuteness, a stranger to the nature of the very pebbles on which he treads, unacquainted, or but very obscurely informed by his natural faculties of his condition after death; it is wonderful, that a being such as this should reluctantly receive, or fastidiously reject, the instruction of the Eternal God! or, if this is saying too much, that he should hastily, and negligently, and triumphantly conclude, that the Supreme Being never had condescended to instruct the race of man. It might properly have been expected, that a rational being, so circumstanced, would have sedulously inquired into a subject of such vast importance; that he would not have

have suffered himself to have been diverted from the investigation by the pursuits of wealth, or honour, or any temporal concern; much less by notions taken up without attention, arguments admitted without examination, or prejudices imbibed in early youth, from the profane ridicule, or impious jestings of sensual and immoral men. It is from the influence of such prejudices that I would guard that part of the rising generation which is committed to our care, by recommending to them a serious perusal of the Tracts which are here presented to them. Let them not refuse to follow this advice, because it is given to them by a churchman; he can have no possible interest in giving it, except what may result to him from the consciousness of endeavouring to discharge his duty, and the hope of being serviceable to them in this world and the next. They need not question his veracity, when he speaks of religion as being serviceable to them in this world; for it is a trite objection, and grounded on a misapprehension of the design of Christianity, which would represent it as an intolerable yoke, so opposite to the propensities, as to be utterly destructive of the felicity of the human mind. It is, in truth, quite the reverse; there is not a single precept in the Gospel, without excepting either that which ordains the forgiveness of injuries, or that which commands every one *to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour*, which is not calculated to promote our happiness. Christianity regulates, but does not extinguish our affections; and in the due regulation of our affections consists our happiness as reasonable beings. If there is one condition in this life more happy than another, it is, surely, that of him who founds all his hope of futurity on the promises of the Gospel; who carefully endeavours to conform his actions to its precepts; looking upon the great God Almighty as his Protector here, his Rewarder hereafter, and his everlasting Preserver. This is a frame of mind so perfective of our nature, that if Christianity, from a belief of which it can only be derived, was as certainly false, as it is certainly true, one could not help wishing that it might be universally received in the world. Unbelievers attempt to make proselytes to infidelity, by pressing upon the minds of the unlearned in Scripture knowledge, the authorities of *Bolingbroke, Voltaire, Helvetius, Hume*, and other Deistical writers. It is proper that young men should be furnished with a ready answer to arguments in favour of infidelity, which are taken from the high literary character of those who profess it; let them remember then, that *Bacon, Boyle, Newton, Grotius, Locke, Euler*,—that *Addison, Hartley, Haller, West, Jenyns*—that *Lords*
Nottingham,

Nottingham, King, Barrington, Lyttelton, with an hundred other laymen, who were surely as eminent for their literary attainments in every kind of science as either Bolingbroke or Voltaire, were professed *believers* of Christianity. . I am quite aware that the truth of Christianity cannot be established by authorities; but neither can its falsehood be so established. Arguments *ad verendum* have little weight with those who know how to use any others, but they have weight with the lazy and the ignorant on both sides of the question. But though I have here suggested to young men a ready answer to such of their profligate acquaintance as may wish to work upon their *prejudices* in favour of infidelity; yet I hope they will not content themselves with being *prejudiced* even in favour of Christianity: they will find in this Collection, such solid arguments in support of its truth, as cannot fail to confirm them, on the most rational grounds, in the belief of the Gospel Dispensation. They may wonder, perhaps, if religion be so useful a thing as is here represented, that their parents should have seldom or never conversed with them on the subject.—If this should be the fact, I can only say, that it is a neglect, of all others, the most to be regretted. And indeed our mode of education, as to religious knowledge, is very defective; the child is instructed in its catechism before it is able to comprehend its meaning, and that is usually all the domestic instruction which it ever receives. But whatever may be the negligence of parents in teaching their children Christianity, or how forcibly soever the maxims and customs of the world may conspire in confirming men in infidelity, it is the duty of those to whom the Education of youth is intrusted, not to despair: their diligence will have its use; it will prevent a bad matter from becoming worse; and if this *foolishness of preaching*, into which I have been betrayed on this occasion, has but the effect of making even one young man of fortune examine into the truth of the Christian Religion, who would not otherwise have done it, I shall not repent the having been *instant out of season*.

Discite, O Miseri, et causas cognoscite rerum
 Quid sumus, et quidnam victuri gignimur: ordo
 Quis datus;—quem te Deus esse
 Jussit.

These were questions which even the Heathen Moralists thought it a shame for a man never to have considered. How much more censurable are those amongst ourselves who waste their days in folly

folly or vice, without ever reflecting upon the providential dispensation under which they live, without having any sublimer piety, any purer morality, any better hopes of futurity than the Heathens had ?

In recommending this Collection to the careful perusal of the younger Clergy, I would not be understood to vouch for the truth of every opinion which is contained in it ; by no means ; there is no certainty of truth but in the word of God. Their Bible is the only sure foundation upon which they ought to build every article of the faith which they profess, every point of doctrine which they teach. All other foundations, whether they be the decisions of councils, the confessions of churches, the prescripts of popes, or the expositions of private men, ought to be considered by them as sandy and unsafe, as in no wise fit to be ultimately relied on. Nor, on the other hand, are they to be fastidiously rejected, as of no use ; for though the Bible be the one infallible rule by which we must measure the truth or falsehood of every religious opinion, yet all men are not equally fitted to apply this rule ; and the wisest men want on many occasions all the helps of human learning to enable them to understand its precise nature, and to define its certain extent. These helps are great and numerous ; they have been supplied in every age, since the death of Christ, by the united labours of learned men in every country where his religion has been received. Great Britain has not been backward in her endeavours to establish the truth, and to illustrate the doctrines of Christianity : she has not abounded so much in systematic Divines as Germany and Holland have done ; yet the most difficult points of Theology have been as well discussed by our English Divines, as by those of any other nation. In proof of this, I might mention the works of Pearson, Mede, Barrow, Burnet, Chillingworth, Stillingfleet, Clarke, Tillotson, Taylor, Benson, Jortin, Secker, and an hundred others ; but the sermons preached at Boyle's Lecture, and the Collection of Tracts against Popery, render every other argument in support of the observation wholly unnecessary. The freedom of inquiry too, which has subsisted in this country during the present century, has eventually been of great service to the cause of Christianity. It must be acknowledged that the works of our Deistical writers have made some few converts to infidelity at home ; and that they have furnished the *Esprits forts* of France, and the *Frey-Geister* of Germany, with every material objection to our religion, which they have of late years displayed with much affectation of originality : but at the same time, we must needs allow

that these works have stimulated some distinguished characters amongst the Laity, and many amongst the Clergy, to exert their talents in removing such difficulties in the Christian system, as would otherwise be likely to perplex the unlearned, to shipwreck the faith of the unstable, and to induce a reluctant scepticism into the minds of the most serious and best intentioned. Some difficulties still remain; and it would be a miracle greater than any we are instructed to believe, if there remained none; if a being with but five scanty inlets of knowledge, separated but yesterday from his mother Earth, and to-day sinking again into her bosom, could fathom the depths of the wisdom and knowledge of *Him which is, which was, and which is to come*,—*the Lord God Almighty, to whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever.*

We live in a dissolute but enlightened age; the restraints of our Religion are ill suited to the profligacy of our manners; and men are soon induced to believe that system to be false, which we wish to find so: that knowledge, moreover, which burns with contempt the illusions of fanaticism and the tyranny of superstition, is often unhappily misemployed, in magnifying every little difficulty attending the proof of the truth Christianity, into an irrefragable argument of its falsehood. The Christian Religion has nothing to apprehend from the strictest investigation of the most learned of its adversaries; it suffers only from the misconceptions of sciolists, and silly pretenders to superior wisdom: a little learning is far more dangerous to the faith of those who possess it, than ignorance itself. Some, I know, affect to believe, that as the restoration of letters was ruinous to the Romish Religion, so the further cultivation of them will be subversive of Christianity itself: of this there is no danger. It may be subversive of the Reliques of the Church of Rome by which other churches are still polluted; of persecutions, of anathemas, of ecclesiastical domination over God's heritage, of all the silly outworks which the pride, the superstition, the knavery of mankind have erected around the citadel of our faith; but the citadel itself is founded on a rock, the gates of hell cannot prevail against it, its master-builder is God; its beauty will be sound ineffable, and its strength impregnable, when it shall be freed from the frippery of human ornaments, cleared from the rubbish of human bulwarks. It is no small part of the province of a teacher of Christianity, to distinguish between the word of God, and the additions which men have made to it. The objections of unbelievers are frequently levelled against what is not Christianity,

Christianity, but mere human system; and he will be best able to defend the former, who is least studious to support the airy pretensions of the latter. The effect of established systems in obstructing truth, is to the last degree deplorable: every one sees it in other churches, but scarcely any one suspects it in his own. *Calvin*, I question not, thought it almost impossible that the Scriptures could ever have been so far perverted as to afford the *Romanists* any handle for their doctrine of Transubstantiation, or that the understanding of any human being could have been so far debased, or rather so utterly annihilated, as to believe in it for a moment: yet this same *Calvin* followed *St. Augustine* in the doctrine of absolute personal reprobation and election, inculcating it as a fundamental article of faith, with nearly the same unchristian zeal which infatuated him when he fastened *Servetus* to the stake. A thousand instances of this blind attachment to system might be taken from the Ecclesiastical History of every century; indeed the whole of it is little more than the history of the struggles of different sects to overturn the systems of others, in order to build up their own; and the great lesson which every sect, and every individual of every sect, ought to learn from its perusal, is—Moderation. Want of genuine moderation towards those who differ from us in religious opinions, seems to be the most unaccountable thing in the world. Every man, who has any religion at all, feels within himself a stronger motive to judge right, than you can possibly suggest to him; and, if he judges wrong, what is that to you? To his own master he standeth or falleth; his wrong judgment may affect his own salvation, it cannot affect yours; for, in the words of *Tertullian*—*nec alii obest aut prodest alterius religio*: this you must admit, unless you think it your duty to instruct him; but instruction may be given with moderation; and considering that the Bible is as open to him as it is to you, you ought not to be over certain that it is your duty to press your instruction upon him; for what is, ordinarily speaking, your instruction, but an attempt to bring him over to your opinion? This principle should be received with great caution, or it may do much mischief; for it is on this principle that the Roman Catholics light up the fires of the inquisition, and compass sea and land to make a proselyte—a proselyte! to what we Protestants believe to be the delusion of Satan, the very canker of Christianity, the grand apostasy from the Gospel foretold by *St. Paul*. The Catholics however in this point act consistently; for, believing in the infallibility of their church, they have a plea for

Their zeal in bringing every one within its pale, which can never be urged by Protestants, with any shadow of justice and propriety.

There are many questions in Divinity, in the investigating of which the mind fluctuates with an irksome uncertainty, unable to perceive such a preponderance of argument as will warrant it in embracing as true, either the one side or the other. This hesitation arises, in many cases, from our not understanding the full meaning of the language, be it common or figurative, in which a doctrine is revealed. In some, it proceeds from our attempting to apprehend definitely, what is expressed indeterminately or clearly, what God hath not thought proper clearly to reveal; in others, it is to be attributed to an indecision of temper, to which some men are peculiarly subject: but let it originate from what cause it may, it is far more tolerable than an arrogant temerity of judgment. A suspicion of fallibility would have been an useful principle to the professors of Christianity in every age; it would have choaked the spirit of persecution in its birth, and have rendered not only the church of Rome, but every church in Christendom, more shy of assuming to itself the proud title of Orthodox, and of branding every other with the opprobrious one of Heterodox, than any of them have hitherto been. There are, you will say, doubtless, some fundamental doctrines in Christianity.—*Paul*, the Apostle, has laid down one foundation; and he tells us, that *other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus*—*The Christ*.—But this proposition—*Jesus is the Messiah*—includes, you will reply, several others, which are equally true. I acknowledge that it does so; and it is every man's duty to search the Scriptures, that he may know what those truths are; but I do not conceive it to be any man's duty, to anathematize those who cannot subscribe to his catalogue of fundamental Christian verities. That man is not to be esteemed an *Atheist*, who acknowledges the existence of a God, the Creator of the universe, though he cannot assent to all the truths of natural religion, which *other* men may undertake to deduce from that principle: nor is he to be esteemed a *Deist*, who acknowledges that *Jesus of Nazareth is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world*, though he cannot assent to all the truths of revealed religion, which *other* men may think themselves warranted in deducing from thence. Still you will probably rejoin, there must be many truths in the Christian religion, concerning which no one ought to hesitate, inasmuch as, without a belief in them, he cannot be reputed a Christian.—Reputed! by whom? By Jesus

Jesus Christ his Lord and his God, or by you?—Rash expositors of points of doubtful disputation; intolerant fabricators of metaphysical Creeds, and incongruous Systems of Theology! Do you undertake to measure the extent of any man's understanding, except your own; to estimate the strength and origin of his habits of thinking; to appreciate his merit or demerit in the use of the talent which God has given him, so as unerringly to pronounce that the belief of this or that doctrine is necessary to his salvation? It is undoubtedly necessary to yours, if you are persuaded that it comes from God; but you take too much upon you, when you erect yourself into an infallible judge of truth and falsehood. We, as Christians, are under no uncertainty as to the being of a God; as to his moral government of the world; as to the terms on which sinners may be reconciled to him; as to *the redemption that is in Jesus Christ*; as to a resurrection from the dead; as of a future state of retribution; nor with respect to other important questions, concerning which the wisest of the Heathen Philosophers were either wholly ignorant, or had no settled notions. But there are other subjects on which the *Academicorum epocha* may be admitted, I apprehend, without injuring the foundations of our Religion: such are the questions which relate to the power of Evil Spirits to suspend the laws of nature, or to actuate the minds of men; to the materiality or immateriality of the human soul; the state of the dead before the general resurrection; the resurrection of the same body; the duration of future punishments; and many others of the same kind. Some one will think that I here speak too freely, and accuse me, probably, as an encourager of sceptical and latitudinarian principles. —What! Shall the church of Christ never be freed from the narrow-minded contentions of bigots; from the insults of men who know not what spirit they are of, when they would stint the Omnipotent in the exercise of his mercy, and bar the doors of heaven against every sect but their own? Shall we never learn to think more humbly of ourselves, and less despicably of others? to believe that the Father of the universe accommodates not his judgments to the wretched wranglings of pedantic Theologues; but that every one, who, with an honest intention, and to the best of his ability seeketh the truth, whether he findeth it or not, and worketh righteousness, will be accepted of him? I have no regard for latitudinarian principles, nor for any principles, but the principles of Truth; and Truth every man must endeavour to investigate for himself; and, ordinarily speaking, he will be most successful

successful in his endeavours, who examines, with candour and care, what can be urged on each side of a greatly controverted question. This sort of examination may, in some instances, produce a doubt, an hesitation, a diffident suspension of judgment; but it will at the same time produce mutual forbearance and good temper towards those who differ from us; our charity will be enlarged, as our understanding is improved. Partial examination is the parent of pertinacity of opinion; and a froward propensity to be angry with those who question the validity of our principles, or deny the justness of our conclusions, in any matter respecting philosophy, policy, or religion, is an infallible mark of prejudice; of our having grounded our opinions on fashion, fancy, interest; on the unexamined tenets of our family, sect, or party; on any thing rather than on the solid foundation of cool and dispassionate reasoning——*Iliacos intra muros peccatur et extra*——

Churchmen as well as Dissenters, and dissenters as well as churchmen, are apt to give a degree of assent to opinions beyond what they can give a reason for; this is the very essence of prejudice: it is difficult for any man entirely to divest himself of all prejudice, but he may surely take care that it be not accompanied with an uncharitable propensity to stigmatize with reproachful appellations, those who cannot measure the rectitude of the Divine dispensations by his rule, nor seek their way to heaven, by insisting on the path which he, in his overweening wisdom, has arrogantly prescribed as the only one which can lead men thither.

This intolerant spirit has abated much of its violence in the course of this century amongst ourselves: we pray to God that it may be utterly extinguished in every part of Christendom; and that the true spirit of Christianity, which is the spirit of meekness, peace, and love, may be introduced in its stead. If different men, in carefully and conscientiously examining the Scriptures, should arrive at different conclusions, even on points of the last importance; we trust that God, who alone knows what every man is capable of, will be merciful to him that is in error. We trust that he will pardon the Unitarian, if he be in an error, because he has fallen into it from the dread of becoming an Idolater, of giving that glory to another which he conceives to be due to God alone. If the worshipper of Jesus Christ be in an error, we trust that God will pardon his mistake, because he has fallen into it from a dread of disobeying what he conceives to be *revealed* concerning the *nature* of the Son, or *commanded* concerning the *honour* to be given him. Both are actuated by the same principle—THE FEAR

OF GOD; and, though that principle impels them into different roads, it is our hope and belief, that, if they add to their faith charity, they will meet in heaven.—If any one thinks differently on the subject, I will have no contention with him; for I feel no disposition to proselyte others to any opinion of mine: esteeming it a duty to speak what I think, I have no scruple in doing that; but to do more is to affect a tyranny over other men's minds; it is to encounter not only the reason, but the passions, prejudices, and interests of mankind; it is to engage in a conflict, in which Christian charity seldom escapes unhurt on either side.

Too much pains cannot be taken by the Clergy in examining the external and internal evidences of the truth of the Gospel, in order that they may generate in their own minds a full conviction of the unspeakable importance of the work in which they are engaged; but that conviction being once produced, their time will be far more usefully employed in discharging their pastoral office with fidelity, than in weighing the importance of all the discordant systems of faith, which have in different ages and countries, not merely occupied the attention of Schoolmen and Monks, but unsheathed the swords of princes, and polluted the temple of *Christ* with more blood than was ever shed on the altars of *Moloch*, or in honour of *Vitzliliputzuli*, the God of *Mexico*. Happily for our age, this spirit of persecution is well nigh extinguished; for notwithstanding the sad fate of the *Calas* family in *France*; notwithstanding the demon of fanaticism which spread its delusion over London and Edinburgh, on the relaxation of the laws against Popery; notwithstanding the burning zeal of a few furious bigots amongst every sect of Christians; still may we foretel, from observing *the signs of the times*, that the æra is approaching very fast, when Theological Acrimony shall be swallowed up in Evangelical Charity, and a liberal toleration become the distinguishing feature of every church in Christendom. The ruling powers in Protestant and Catholic states begin at length every where to perceive, that an uniformity of sentiment in matters of religion is a circumstance impossible to be obtained; that it has never yet existed in the church of Christ, from the Apostolic age to our own; and they begin to be ashamed of the fines, confiscations, imprisonments, tortures, of all the unjust and sanguinary efforts which they have severally made use of to procure it. They perceive too that a diversity in religious opinions may subsist among the subjects of the same state, without endangering the common weal; and they begin to think it reasonable, that

no

no man should be abridged in the exercise of natural rights, merely on the score of Religion. These enlarged sentiments proceed not, I would willingly hope, from what the Germans have called *Indifferentism* in Religion; but partly from a perfect knowledge of its true end, which is Charity; and partly from that consciousness of intellectual weakness, which is ever most conspicuous in minds the most enlightened; and which, wherever it subsists, puts a stop to dogmatism and intolerance of every kind.

The Books and Tracts which I have here printed, are all of them so well known, that there is little need to give a long account of any of them. I have chosen them out of a great variety, which suggested themselves to my mind; but I have no expectation that every one should be pleased with the choice which I have made. I once knew a Divine of the Church of *England*, of great eminence in it, and deservedly esteemed a good scholar, who, having accidentally taken up, in a friend's apartment, a book written by a Dissenter, hastily laid it down again, declaring, that "he never read dissenting Divinity." I ought to apologize to Men of this Gentleman's opinion, for having made so much use of the works of the Dissenters in this Collection; but the truth is, I did not at all consider the quarter from whence the matter was taken, but whether it was good, and suited to my purpose; it was a circumstance of utter indifference to me, whether it was of *Paul*, or *Apollos*, or *Cephas*, provided it was of *Christ*.

As this Collection will probably fall into the hands of some, who may wish to become acquainted with the sort of Questions which are usually maintained by those who proceed to the degree of Bachelor or Doctor in Divinity, I thought it might be of service to them, if I put down a few of those which have been publicly disputed on in the Theological Schools at *Cambridge*, within the last twenty-five or thirty years. I have not observed much order in arranging the questions: the reader will remark, that they are not all of equal importance; and, what he may judge more extraordinary, he will perceive, that the same doctrine is not maintained in them all. With regard to their importance, that must be expected to be variable, as they have been proposed by men of very different talents and judgements. A sameness of doctrine might indeed have been secured by the Professor, without whose approbation no question can be proposed for disputation: but I, for my part, (though some will probably blame me for it) have thought it more liberal and reasonable to suffer this

contrariety, in some instances, to take place, than to oblige men to support what they did not believe, or to preclude them from supporting what they did believe to be revealed in the Scriptures. Truth, I hope, has not suffered from this conduct: the mere acceptance of a question is not understood to lay the Professor under any obligation to support it in the disputation; if he thinks it not founded in the word of God, it is his duty to endeavour to shew the Respondent wherein he is mistaken; and if he be not able to do that, still there is no fear of error being established by his inability to detect it, when it is considered before what a learned audience the disputation is held; that the Respondent must either be a Bachelor of Divinity, or a Master of Arts, of four years standing; and that three Masters of Arts are the regular Opponents at every Divinity Act.

QUÆSTIONES QUÆDAM THEOLOGICÆ IN ACADEMIA CANTABRIGIENSI,

AB ANNO 1755 USQUE AD ANN. 1785,

Publicè disputatæ sub Præsidio S. Theologiæ Professorum Reg.

THOMÆ RUTHERFORTH, RICARDI WATSON,

QUÆST.

- 1 **N**ON fuit Deo indignum mortis poena sancire, ne primi hominum generis parentes unius cujusdam arboris fructu vescerentur.
- 2 Quod genus humanum sit laboribus et morti subiectum propter Adami peccatum, docetur in sacra pagina, nec est rationi contrarium.
- 3 Lapsus olim fuisse Angelorum patet ex sacris literis.
- 4 Verus erat serpens, per quem Eva decepta fuit; sed facultatibus, quæ ipsi non essent naturaliter insitæ, utebatur.
- 5 Univerſus serpentum cultus apud Gentiles ad confirmandam generalem interpretationem Diaboli sub serpentis forma latentis, prout in sacris Scripturis traditur, apte convenit atque inde derivari videtur.
- 6 Præſcientia divina non erat causa lapsus Adami.
- 7 Peccatum originis non est in imitatione Adami situm, sed est vitium et depravatio naturæ cujusslibet hominis ab Adamo propagati.
- 8 Lapsus Adami humanam naturam ad peccatum proclivorem reddidit.
- 9 Christus ante erat quam humana natura ab eo induebatur.
- 10 Non fuit indignum Filio Dei, hominum generis redimendi causa, humanam naturam induere.
- 11 Sacrificia jussu Dei principio sunt constituta.
- 12 Sacrificia principio constituta sunt ut essent typi mortis Christi.
- 13 Remissio peccatorum per Mediatorem et Sacrificium vicarium haud Deo est indigna.
- 14 Satisfactio pro peccatis hominum per mortem Christi non repugnat rationi.
- 15 Christum ipsum infontem, a Deo ad mortem datum esse pro fontibus, est credibile.
- 16 Quod traditur in sacris Scripturis de lapsu, redemptione, et futuro statu humani generis, non contradicit divinis perfectionibus.
- 17 Christiana revelatio rationis inventa superat rerum divinarum numero et certitudine.
- 18 Ratio sola nullam potest invenire conditionem, qua Deus velit hominibus dare peccatorum veniam et impunitatem.

- 19 Mors Christi est propria et plena satisfactio pro peccatis hominum.
- 20 Christus pro omnibus est mortuus.
- 21 Opera justorum vitam æternam per se non merentur.
- 22 Justitia Christi non sic hominibus imputatur, ut Dei judicio, ipsi censeantur eam præstitisse.
- 23 Coram Deo homo reputatur justus non propter meritum suum, sed propter meritum Jesu Christi, per fidem in ejus nomine.
- 24 Neque docent sacræ Scripturæ, neque articuli Ecclesiæ Anglicanæ, Christi justitiam nobis imputari in justificationem, sed fidem solam.
- 25 Paulus et Jacobus, quanquam de hominum justificatione verbis discrepare videantur, sententiis tamen non discrepant.
- 26 Justificatio nec sine fide et pœnitentia potest comparari, nec sine fidei et pœnitentiæ fructibus conservari.
- 27 Sacræ Scripturæ nullibi docent homines per fidem solam, bonorum operum fructibus carentem, supremo die justificandos.
- 28 Non est ea religionis Christi ratio, ut omnibus qui per eam justii apud Christum habeantur, certa salutis consequendæ fiducia in hæc vita ingeneretur.
- 29 Fides Christiana nec cum ab hominibus suscipiatur, nec postquam suscepta sit, rationis usum aspernat.
- 30 Fuit Moses verus Propheta a Deo missus.
- 31 Non fuit a Dei natura alienum Israelitas in populum sibi peculiarem eligere.
- 32 Moses spem vitæ æternæ Israelitis ostendit.
- 33 Distributio præmiorum et pœnarum temporalium quæ promissa fuit in libris Mosaicis, non erat pro meritis singulorum, nec in rebus administrandis ita erat acta.
- 34 Colligi non potest ex libris Mosaicis veteres Judæos æterna impiorum supplicia apud inferos pati.
- 35 Lex Mosaica non ideo Deo indigna censenda est, quia docet, Deum iniquitatem patrum in filios visitare.
- 36 Pœna talionis, quam lex Mosaica constituit, non fuit Deo legislatore indigna.
- 37 Licentia falsos Deos colendi non fuit Israelitis concessa.
- 38 Quod religio Judaica sit minus perfecta quam Christiana, id nihil probat contra divinam hujus et illius originem.
- 39 Israelitæ, spoliis Ægyptiorum auferendis, legem naturæ non violabant.
- 40 Non erat Deo indignum Canaanæos Israelitis excindendos tradere.
- 41 Filia Jephthæ non fuit immolata.
- 42 Per legem Mosaicam Judæis non licuit pro victimis homines immolare.
- 43 Mandatum Abrahamo datum de immolatione Isaaci ad mortem Christi repræsentandam, haud alienum fuit divinæ sapientiæ aut justitiæ.
- 44 Non fuit Deo indignum diras Noachichas in Chamum conficere,
- 45 Nullæ in libro Psalmorum obnunciantur diræ, quæ ostendant eos non fuisse divino instinctu conscriptos,

- 46 Scriptura qua docemur "Deum cor Pharoahonis obfirmasse" nihil in se continet contra Dei benignitatem; quantum ex ratione aut revelatione tunc temporis Israelitis concessa colligi potest.
- 47 Hominibus qui ante diluvium vixerunt non licuit, escæ causa, animalia mactare.
- 48 Diluvium olim fuisse universale traditur in sacra Scriptura, nec est historiæ vel civili vel naturali contrarium.
- 49 Veritas miraculorum, quæ in Veteri Testamento traduntur, cum idololatria moribusque depravatis Judæorum constare potest.
- 50 Vaticinia quibus denunciavit Moses, Palestinam ob inobedientiam Judæorum incultam ab iis sterilemque futuram esse, hodie implentur.
- 51 Deus cum dixerit Israelitis, se prophetam Mosi similem ex fratribus eorum esse excitaturum, hoc promisso solum Messiam designavit.
- 52 Aliquæ extant prædictiones, temporibus Mosi antiquiores, quæ ad Christum sunt referendæ.
- 53 Ex veterum prophetarum prædictionibus duo Messiæ, alter Davidis alter Josephi filius, non erant in mundum venturi.
- 54 Sceptrum quod non ante erat a Juda discessurum quam Shiloh adveniret, potestatem tribus regendæ designabat.
- 55 Israelitæ circumcisionis ritum ab Ægyptiis non receperunt.
- 56 Mare rubrum, Israelitis per illud transeuntibus, ad utrumque latus instar muri per miraculum stetit.
- 57 Confusio linguarum Babylonica absque Dei interventu explanari nequit.
- 58 Miracula sunt idonea argumenta divinæ missionis.
- 59 Miracula fuisse olim edita satis probari potest ex humano testimonio.
- 60 Credibile est, Deum posse miracula facere, et interdum velle, et humano testimonio patet fecisse.
- 61 Miracula non nisi a Deo, aut a Creatura particulari ejus jussu et potentia agente, efficiuntur.
- 62 Magi Ægyptii vera coram Pharoahone miracula fecerunt.
- 63 Tentatio Christi in deserto fuit visio a Deo missa.
- 64 Tentatio Christi in deserto non fuit visio a Deo missa.
- 65 Nec per visionem, nec per Diabolum, sub qualibet externa forma, similiter autem ac homo Christus tentabatur.
- 66 Miracula in Evangeliiis tradita historiam cum ipsis conjunctam adeo non infirmant, ut absque illorum ope rerum gestarum series explicari nequeat.
- 67 Christi Apostolis vita defunctis credibile est cessasse miracula.
- 68 Extraordinaria spiritus sancti dona statim post tempora Apostolorum in Ecclesia Christiana non cessaverunt.
- 69 Spiritus sanctus est persona.
- 70 Christianorum est officium spiritum sanctum colere et precari.
- 71 Dantur in Christo fidelibus certa quædam spiritus sancti auxilia.
- 72 Fidei et virtutis adjumenta quæ homines a spiritu sancto habent, eorum libertatem non tollunt.

- 73 Spiritus sanctus interiora fidei ac virtutis adjumenta hominibus ita suppeditare solet, ut nullo animi tactu percipiantur.
- 74 Interiora quædam, Christianæ Religionis suscipiendæ ac præstandæ adjumenta, hominum animis a spiritu sancto subministrantur.
- 75 Ad Theologiam Christianam plene et perfecte intelligendam animo opus est literis doctrinisque imbuto.
- 76 Veritatis Christianæ Religionis evidentia non a spiritu sancto inspiratur, sed ex recto rationis usu pendet.
- 77 Diversa revelationum genera, pro varia rerum et hominum conditione, diversis hominum moribus et ingeniis accommodantur.
- 78 Consilium divinum de redimendo hominum genere, prout Christi tempora accedebant, gradatim aperiebatur.
- 79 In libris Veteris Testamenti prædicatur Christiana Dispensatio.
- 80 Christus et Apostoli abroganda lege Mosaica de divina legislatoris auctoritate non detrahunt.
- 81 Religio quam Christus humano generi tradidit non continetur lege naturali denuo promulganda.
- 82 Non est res indifferens quam quisque religionem colat.
- 83 Error in doctrinis religionis speculativis non est innocens.
- 84 Post Canonem Scripturæ consignatum novæ revelationes non sunt expectandæ.
- 85 Messias per veteres prophetas Judæis promissus non futurus erat rex terrestris.
- 86 Veritas Christianæ revelationis patet ex impletione prædictionum veterum prophetarum.
- 87 Jesus Nazarenus fuit verus Messias a Deo promissus.
- 88 Prædictiones veterum prophetarum non ita citantur in Novo Testamento, quasi singulæ seorsim a cæteris ostenderent Jesum esse Messiam.
- 89 Clades Hierosolymitana et status populi Judaici hodiernus pro magno argumento est veritatis Christianæ Religionis.
- 90 Deus nulla lege aut vaticinatione significavit, se nolle Judæorum quenkum in ullam Christianorum civitatem civem adscriptitium recipi.
- 91 Propagatio fidei Christianæ ante Constantini tempora probat auctoritatem ejus divinam.
- 92 Conversio Divi Pauli ortum suum non debuit superstitioni, sed miraculis a Deo editis et veritati Christianæ Religionis.
- 93 Ex vita et moribus Christi et Apostolorum Christianæ religionis veritas probari potest.
- 94 Miracula Christi una cum doctrina probant divinam ejus missionem.
- 95 Miracula Christi ipsa per se valent ad probandam divinam ejus missionem.
- 96 Ad stabiliendam revelationis doctrinam non satis valet interna evidentia.
- 97 Dissensiones Christianorum, de rebus quæ in religione Christiana contineantur, non ostendunt religionem ipsam esse falsam.
- 98 Variantes lectiones et menda auctoritatem sacræ Scripturæ non labefaciunt in rebus ad fidem et mores spectantibus.
- 99 Dissensiones

- 99 Diffensiones inter Apostolos de circumcisione gentium divinam Christianæ religionis auctoritatem non impugnant.
- 100 Cæteri Apostoli cum Paulo consentiebant, Judæos sine obtemperanda lege Mosaica posse per Christum salutem consequi.
- 101 Auctoritas testimonii quo Religio Christi confirmatur temporum longinquitate non imminuta est.
- 102 Nihil in Evangelio Matthæi traditur ex quo probari possit, id scriptum fuisse post excidium Hierosolymitanum.
- 103 Apostoli nihil tradiderunt, ex quo intelligamus credidisse eos mundum suis temporibus finem fuisse habiturum.
- 104 Religio Christiana non ideo vituperanda est quod nihil de amicitia privata vel de amore patriæ præscripserit.
- 105 Divina Christianæ religionis auctoritas non imminuitur ex eo quod nondum universis innotuit.
- 106 Jesuitæ Christi causam male agunt tolerando ritus et ceremonias, quas apud Sinas in honorem Confusii, parentum, cæterorumque majorum mos est celebrare.
- 107 Magistratui jus non competit subditos coercendi ad cultum illum divinum celebrandum, lege licet stabilitum, quem ipsi vel rationi vel revelationi haud consentaneum censent.
- 108 Non est libertati Christianæ alienum ut in rebus indifferentibus ad cultum Dei spectantibus ecclesia auctoritatem habeat.
- 109 In fidei controversiis nulla datur ecclesiæ auctoritas quæ jus tollit privati judicii.
- 110 Christianorum hominum qui se ad civitatis suæ religionem conformare nolint, jus nullum violatur si e muneribus civilibus lege lata excludantur.
- 111 Indulgentia Pontificiis nuper concessa nec rationi, nec sacris literis, nec reipublicæ saluti repugnat.
- 112 Vis externa non est hominibus adhibenda propter religionem quam profitentur.
- 113 Unaquæque ecclesia jure postulare potest, ut ii quibus publice docendi munus committat, religionis Christianæ institutionibus, ejus auctoritate comprobatis, assentiant.
- 114 Et rationi et sacris Scripturis consentaneum est ut homines ecclesiastici potestati civili subjiciantur.
- 115 Non est Christianis interdictum, ut quavis de causa fidem suam ullo jurejurando ne astringant.
- 116 Nulla in civilibus hominum officiis mutatio est facta per Christi religionem.
- 117 Non est a Christi religione alienum civili auctoritate recipi ac stabiliri.
- 118 Christiana religio incrementa sua in primis ecclesiæ sæculis non debuit causis, ut vocantur, secundis, sed partim internæ suæ excellentiæ, partim auctoris sui potestati divinæ.
- 119 Perspicuitas sacrorum librorum non efficit ut supervacaneum sit homines ad religionem Christi instituerè.
- 120 Ministris ecclesiæ debetur aliquod stipendium.
- 121 Forma regiminis in ecclesia Anglicana constituti, et verbo Dei et ecclesiæ primitivæ usu sancitur.

- 122 Ecclesiastici regiminis in Anglia et in Scotia constituti, neutra forma, aut juri hominum naturali aut verbo Dei repugnat.
- 123 A Christi et Apostolorum institutione patet, ordinem fuisse Episcopatus a Presbyteriatu diversum, eoque superiorem.
- 124 Statæ precum formulæ sunt maxime conformes sacris Scripturis et ecclesiæ primitivæ praxi.
- 125 Liturgiæ in diversis ecclesiis diversæ, modo sacris literis haud adverſentur, non sunt improbandæ.
- 126 Precatio Dominica est formula quam omnes Christi discipuli in Deo precando adhibere debent.
- 127 Preces et publicæ et privatæ tantum in nomine Christi sunt peragendæ.
- 128 Creaturam cultu religioso prosequi non licet.
- 129 E Stephani martyris moribundi precibus patet Jesum Christum esse Deum.
- 130 Christus summo cultu, quem Deo Patri reddimus, colendus est.
- 131 Christus quâ Mediator novi fœderis est adæquatum objectum cultus religiosi.
- 132 Fidei in tres personas ejusdem substantiæ, potentiæ, et æternitatis, Patrem, Filium, et Spiritum Sanctum, unius Dei cultus non repugnat.
- 133 Myſteria revelationis non ostendunt eam non esse a Deo traditam.
- 134 Deo indignum non fuit ut instituta positiva in religione traderet.
- 135 Positiva religionis præcepta non minus obligant quam moralia.
- 136 Duo tantum novi fœderis sacramenta instituit Christus.
- 137 Confirmatio, pœnitentia, ordo, matrimonium, et extrema unctio pro sacramentis Evangelicis non sunt habenda.
- 138 Cœna Dominica Epuli sacrificialis rationem non habet.
- 139 Nullum in missa fit sacrificium quo peccata viventium ac mortuorum expiantur.
- 140 Animus Christianus necessario præcedit dignam Eucharistiæ perceptionem.
- 141 Eucharistia usque ad secundum Christi adventum ab ejus discipulis celebrari debet.
- 142 Calix Laicis non est denegandus.
- 143 Doctrina pontificiorum de transubstantiatione nec rationi, nec sensuum testimonio, nec sacris Scripturis consentaneum est.
- 144 Transubstantiatio non est æque credibilis ac Trinitas personarum in una essentia.
- 145 Leges Anglicanæ quæ vetant munera reipublicæ cuiquam deferri qui nolit Eucharistiâ percipere juxta ecclesiæ Anglicanæ præscriptum Eucharistiæ religionem non polluant.
- 146 Recte in ecclesia Anglicana sancitur ne quis nisi flexis genibus cœnam Domini capiat.
- 147 Religio Christiana postulat ut qui eam suscipiant aqua baptizentur.
- 148 Baptismus parvulorum omnino in ecclesia retinendus est, ut qui cum Christi institutione optime conveniat.
- 149 Lex Christi non postulat ut omnes qui baptizentur in aquam immergantur.

- 50 Aquæ aspersio seu affusio in baptismo administrando non irritum reddit sacramentum.
- 51 Omne peccatum quod Christiani post baptismum committant, si poenitendo corrigatur, eos a salute non excludit.
- 52 Sabbatum erat, ante legem per Moysen traditum, a Deo constitutum.
- 53 Præcepta Mosaica de modo observandi Sabbatum Christianos non obligant.
- 54 Sabbatum ab ultimo die septimanæ recte est inter Christianos ad primum translatum.
- 55 Ad diem Dominicum religiose observandum cuncti Christiani tenentur.
- 56 Doctrina absolutæ prædestinationis cum divinis pugnat attributis.
- 57 Doctrina prædestinationis et electionis ad futurum aut miseriæ aut felicitatis statum ex sacra Scriptura colligi nequit.
- 58 Prædestinatio Paulina tota spectat ad Gentium vocationem.
- 59 In libris novi fœderis nihil de prædestinatione traditur quod diligentiam hominum in officiis præstandis jure imminuat.
- 60 Sacræ Scripturæ nullibi docent eos qui de Christo nunquam audiverunt non posse salutem æternam consequi.
- 61 Salus nostra in fide in Christum redemptorem consistit.
- 62 Doctrina ecclesiæ pontificiæ de purgatorio nullis vel sacra Scripturæ vel rationis nititur fundamentis.
- 63 Sanctorum et Angelorum cultus et invocatio apud pontificios est idololatria.
- 64 Ipse jejunandi actus per se et sua natura vim et rationem religionis non habet.
- 65 Confessio privata sacerdoti facta non est ad salutem necessaria.
- 66 Plebi et indoctis sacrorum librorum lectio non est interdicens.
- 67 Nec Petrus nec Pontifex Romanus constitutus fuit a Christo totius ecclesiæ monarcha.
- 68 In sacris libris continentur omnia quæ sunt ad salutem necessaria.
- 69 Sacra Scriptura est unica Christianæ fidei norma.
- 70 Nullus est in ecclesia judex infallibilis controversiarum.
- 71 Characteres hominis peccati in posteriore Paulina ad Thessalonicenses epistola expressi Pontifici Romano apprimè conveniunt.
- 72 Pars historica Novi Testamenti quæ continet eventus divinam opem non exposcentes jure fidem nostram vindicat.
- 73 Datur status medius inter mortem et resurrectionem.
- 74 Non datur status medius inter mortem et resurrectionem.
- 75 Nec felicitas beatorum perfecta nec miseria impiorum extrema erit ante resurrectionem et generale judicium.
- 76 Jobi de vindice suo videndo fiducia ad spem vitæ futuræ referenda est.
- 77 Resurrectio Christi probatur testibus fide dignis.
- 78 Resurrectio mortuorum patet ex parabola Divitis ac Lazari.
- 79 Anima a corpore soluta in statu separato manet ad resurrectionem.
- 80 Resurrectio quæ patefacta et promissa est in Evangelio est resurrectio corporis.
- 81 Æterna felicitas non patet nisi ex revelatione.

- 182 Pœnæ improborum erunt æternæ.
- 183 Beatos in statu gloriæ se mutuo agnituros esse, nec ratione nec sacris Scripturis refragatur.
- 184 Ex Evangelistarum et Apostolorum scriptis minime patet qui in historiis suis servari dicuntur eos ideo vitam æternam consecuturos.
- 185 Christus vera dæmonia eiecit.
- 186 Oraculorum responsa antiquitus reddita non a sacerdotum præstigiis aut humano quolibet artificio, sed a dæmonum quos Deus Ethnicos illudere passus est malignitate.
- 187 Diaconi non ad civile tantum, sed ad sacrum etiam munus initio sunt constituti.
- 188 Bona Christianorum non sunt omnibus communia.
- 189 Nec peccavit Christus, nec peccare potuit.
- 190 Non necessitate quadam impulsus, sed consilio suo obsecutus Judas, Christum in pontificum manus tradidit.
- 191 Particularis providentiæ doctrina cum ratione et sacris Scripturis consonat.
- 192 Præcepta de charitate inimicorum quæ in sacris libris traduntur, naturæ hominum apte conveniunt.
- 193 Licet sub novo fœdere Christianis sanguine vesci.
- 194 Epistola ad Hebræos a Paulo scripta est.
- 195 Mons Ebal fuit, in quo Israelitæ a Deo jussi sunt aram extruere postquam Jordanem transissent.
- 196 Judæi recte recusarunt ne Samaritani templum Dei secum ædificarent.
- 197 Apostoli omnes intellexerunt linguas Sancti Spiritus afflatu.
- 198 Christi bene merita afficiunt pœnitentes et probos, non impœnitentes et reprobos.
- 199 Præcepta Evangelii quæ ad mores spectant tendunt ad humanam felicitatem promovendam.
- 200 Christus in mundum venit ut homines non solum doceret, sed redimeret.

These Questions may be sufficient to give the Reader some notion of the Subjects which have of late engaged the attention of the Disputants in the Divinity Schools at Cambridge. I will afford him an opportunity of contrasting our labours with those of our Predecessors, without taking upon me to determine whether we shall derive credit or dishonour from the comparison. If he should think that we have in some instances a more enlarged view of the Christian system, and more liberal notions concerning the manner in which dissentients from our particular mode of faith and worship ought to be treated than they had, I will take the liberty to say, that there is room for improvement in both these points.

In 1634 were published at Cambridge——*Determinationes Quæstionum quarundam Theologicarum, in Academia Cantabrigiensi publicè disputatarum*——by Doctor DAVENANT, then Bishop of Salisbury, and formerly Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity.

I N D E X Q U Æ S T I O N U M.

Q U Æ S T.

- 1 **C**ONCUPISCENTIA in renatis est peccatum.
2. Papistarum preces pro defunctis sunt inanes.
- 3 Verè credentes certi esse possunt de sua salute.
- 4 Nulla est temporalis Papæ potestas super reges in ordine ad bonum spirituale.
- 5 Infallibilis determinatio fidei non est annexa cathedræ Papali.
- 6 Cæca Jesuitarum obedientia est illicita.
- 7 Non licet Protestanti salva conscientia missæ interesse.
- 8 Opera pœnalia non sunt divinæ justitiæ satisfactoria.
- 9 Non datur liberum arbitrium in non renatis, ad bonum spirituale.
- 10 Opera renatorum labe peccati sunt inquinata.
- 11 Civilis jurisdictio jure conceditur personis ecclesiasticis.
- 12 Renuente magistratu, non licet populo reformationem ecclesiæ moliri.
- 13 Missa pontificia non est sacrificium propitiatorium pro vivis et mortuis.
- 14 Antiqui Patres non meruerunt Christi incarnationem, nec aliquas ejus circumstantias.
- 15 Tota potestas sacerdotum est spiritualis.
- 16 Pronitas ad malum non fuit ex principiis integræ naturæ.
- 17 Jesuitici pontificii non possunt esse boni subditi.
- 18 Cultus religiosus creaturæ est idololatria.
- 19 Rex in regno suo est minor solo Deo.
- 20 Ecclesia Anglicana justissime obligat ad ceremonias.
- 21 Ecclesia Romana est apostatica.
- 22 Decretum non tollit libertatem.
- 23 Sacramenta non conferunt gratiam ex opere operato.
- 24 In essentia divina nec aliud nec accidens.
- 25 Præscientia divina non erat causa lapsus humani.
- 26 Subjectum divinæ prædestinationis est homo lapsus.
- 27 Papistæ tenentur interesse sacris Protestantium.
- 28 Papæ jurisdictio non est universalis.
- 29 Fides implicita non est salutifera.
- 30 Dominium temporale non fundatur in gratia.
- 31 Omne peccatum est sua natura mortiferum.
- 32 Consilia quæ vocantur Evangelica, habent quandoque vim præcepti.

- 33 Remissa culpa remittitur poena.
- 34 Nemo potest de congruo mereri primam gratiam divinam.
- 35 Ecclesia invisibilis non est Idea Platonica.
- 36 Christi victima sola vere expiatoria.
- 37 Fides justificans est fiducia in Christum mediatorem.
- 38 Fides justificans non potest a charitate disjungi.
- 39 Laici non sunt arcendi a lectione Scripturarum.
- 40 Superbia fuit primum peccatum Angelorum.
- 41 Publica Religionis exercitia sunt lingua vulgari peragenda.
- 42 Diversitas graduum in ministris Evangelicis, verbo Dei non repugnat.
- 43 Cœlibatus non est necessario sacris ordinibus annexus.
- 44 Sancti non sunt invocandi.
- 45 Ignorantia non excusat peccatum.
- 46 Sancta ecclesia Catholica quam credimus, ex solis constat electis.
- 47 Nec Petrus nec Pontifex Romanus constitutus fuit a Christo ecclesia totius monarcha.
- 48 Censura ecclesiastica non tollit vincula officiorum.
- 49 Non datur omnibus auxilium sufficiens ad salutem.
- 50 Ecclesia Romana injuste calicem Laicis ademit.

Doctor TUCKNEY was elected Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge in 1655; his *Prælectiones Theologicae, necnon Determinationes Quæstionum variarum insignium in Scholis Academicis Cantabrigiensibus habitæ*—were published at Amsterdam in 1679.

QUÆSTIONES DETERMINATÆ.

- 1 **M**AGISTRATUM gerere non repugnat Christi institutis.
- 2 Humana Christi natura non est ex unione hypostatica Divinarum proprietatum particeps.
- 3 Religio non est vi et armis propaganda.
- 4 Infallibilitas nulli competit creaturæ.
- 5 Electio est prorsus gratuita.
- 6 Omne peccatum est sua natura mortale.
- 7 Ad ministerium ecclesiæ fuscipiendum ordinarie requiritur legitima vocatio.
- 8 Christiano licet ex intuitu mercedis operari.
- 9 Meritum Papisticum ex S. Scriptura non probatur.
- 10 Purgatorium Papisticum est fictitium.
- 11 Poenæ propter peccatum æternæ non sunt iniquæ.
- 12 *Ποχωτισμὸς* nec ratione fundatur nec Scriptura.
- 13 Peccata præterita et futura non simul remittuntur.
- 14 Fraudes quæ vocantur piæ sunt illicitæ.
- 15 Nullus assensus constituit rationem fidei justificantis.

- 16 Ad redemptionis nostræ *λυτρος* tam activa quam passiva Christi spectat obedientia.
- 17 Deus reputat pro justis non nisi reverà justos.
- 18 Rectitudo primi parentis non fuit donum supernaturale.
- 19 Beati in statu gloriæ se mutuo sunt agniture.
- 20 *Αυτοφρον* non est licita.
- 21 Vere fideles certi esse possunt de salute.
- 22 Credentes tenentur ad obedientiam legis.
- 23 Dominium temporale non fundatur in gratia.
- 24 Cognitio sana necessario credendorum est pars religionis essentialis.
- 25 Regnum Christi personale in terris non est expectandum.
- 26 Ministris conjugium non est interdicens.
- 27 Intellectus vi sola nativi luminis non percipit salutariter doctrinam Evangelii.
- 28 Fides justificans a bonis operibus seungi nequit.
- 29 Præcepta Evangelica de vita instituenda sunt rectæ rationi consentanea.
- 30 Renati in hac vita non possunt perfecte legem Dei adimplere.
- 31 Externus judex infallibilis in controversiis fidei, nec datur, nec requiritur in ecclesia.
- 32 Bona opera sunt necessaria ad salutem.
- 33 Concupiscentia in renatis est peccatum.
- 34 Quintum Danielis imperium non restat adhuc expectandum.
- 35 Interna Dei illuminatio non tollit usum necessarium ministerii Evangelici.
- 36 Officia ecclesiastica sunt lingua vulgò nota celebranda.
- 37 Verbum Dei externum est ordinarium medium conversionis ad salutem.
- 38 Indulgentiæ pontificiæ non nituntur verbo divino.
- 39 Christus est Patri *ὁμοῖος*.
- 40 Status in quo homo nec justus sit nec injustus non datur.
- 41 Jacobi sententia de justificatione non est adversaria Paulinæ.
- 42 Usura legitima non est illicita.
- 43 Sacrificia sub et ante Mosaicam œconomiam typi fuerunt Jesu Christi.
- 44 Divortium matrimoniale non solvit vinculum.
- 45 Culpa remissa non retinetur pœna.
- 46 Non licet gladio animadvertere in hæreticos.
- 47 Promulgatio est de essentia legis divinæ.
- 48 Principes nulli terreno foro sunt obnoxii.
- 49 Externa fidei professio dat jus ad sacramenta.
- 50 Lectio S. Scripturæ non est interdicens Laicis.
- 51 Characteres Antichristi in Scriptura expressi præcipue conveniunt pontifici Romano.
- 52 Satisfactio Christi pro peccatis est congrua justitiæ et gratiæ divinæ.

I once intended to have digested the whole of Theology into a connected series of propositions, with references to such Authors, ancient and modern, as had treated the affirmative and negative side of each, with the greatest clearness and precision.

The mere enunciation of a proposition conveys a degree of useful knowledge; and the various questions which suggest themselves on every important subject in Divinity might be stated with such precision, and made so to depend on each other, that they would comprehend in a short compass the marrow of many a bulky System, and would at the same time give such a regular and complete view of the whole subject, as constitutes the chief utility of Systematic Treatises. I had made some little progress in this work, when I was seized with a disorder, three years ago, that has rendered me unequal to the exertions which its completion would require. If any person should be induced to undertake a work of this nature, he will find his endeavours much assisted by the *Aphorismi per universam Theologiam Breviores*, of Cocceius, and by his Aphorisms *contra Socinianos et contra Pontificios*; by the *Syllabus Quaestionum præcipuarum, quæ inter Socinianos reliquosque Ecclesiæ reformatæ, simul ac Pontificiæ Theologos ventilantur*, published in Bishop Barlow's Remains; by a small tract intitled *Quæstiones præcipuæ, eæque nude propositæ, de Universa Doctrina Christianorum*, Bremæ 1617; by the *Summa Theologica* of Thomas Aquinas; for notwithstanding the ridicule which usually, in these days, attends the mere mention of the Angelic Doctor, I will venture to affirm, that in that work there are mixed indeed with many difficult subtleties and perverse interpretations of the Scripture, not a few Theological questions of great moment stated with clearness and judgment; by *Doddridge's Lectures*; by the *Theses Theologicæ* of Vossius, and of Le Blanc; by the *Syntagma Thesium in Academia Salmuriensi disputatarum*; by the *Works* of Episcopius, Limborch, Turretin, Curcellæus, Budæus, Calvin, Arminius, Beckius; and by our English Divines, of whom it may be said in general, that they have illustrated particular doctrines of Christianity with more strength of argument and perspicuity of language, than are to be met with in the writings of the Divines of any other nation.

I hat you labour to keep from your breast all prejudice, party-
 position, and party-zeal.—That you study to live in peace
 and love with all your fellow-Christians, and that you steadily
 assist for yourself, and freely allow to others, the unalienable
 rights of judgment and conscience.”

It is possible to adjust the course of a tutor and his pupils more
 equitably. But it must here be observed, that Dr. TAYLOR ever meant
 the liberty he claimed for himself, and allowed to others, should be de-
 rected by serious forms of mind, and a real desire to improve practical
 religion. The charge that he had divine things revealed to him
 heart, and had a special influence over his pupils, the labourer to
 explain and vindicate the doctrine of Revelation for the reason, that
 he might most effectually serve the cause of vital Religion.
 It were to be wished, that those who are students for the ministry, who

THE Reader is here presented with the plan which Dr. TAYLOR
 followed, in leading his pupils to a just and rational acquaint-
 ance with the principles of Religion, founded upon an accurate know-
 ledge of the Scriptures.

The importance of this service, and his accountableness in a great
 measure for the event, were considerations of the last moment, and
 caused him to compose, and deliver his academical instructions with the
 utmost circumspection. To his own judgment, after the strictest revival,
 the principles here advanced, appeared just and scriptural; but he did
 not therefore presume they were absolutely free from error; much less
 did he think himself authorized, as a public tutor, to impose his senti-
 ments on young minds with an overbearing hand. That he might do
 justice to his pupils, and himself, he always prefaced his lectures with the
 following solemn CHARGE, which does honor to the Author, and affords
 a noble precedent to seminaries of learning.

- I. “I do solemnly charge you, in the name of the God of Truth,
 and of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the Way, the Truth, and
 the Life, and before whose judgment-seat you must in no long
 time appear, that in all your studies and inquiries of a religious
 nature, present or future, you do constantly, carefully, impar-
 tially, and conscientiously attend to evidence, as it lies in the
 holy Scriptures, or in the nature of things, and the dictates of
 reason; cautiously guarding against the sallies of imagination,
 and the fallacy of ill-grounded conjecture.”
- II.—“That you admit, embrace, or assent to no principle, or
 sentiment, by me taught or advanced, but only so far as it shall
 appear to you to be supported and justified by proper evidence
 from Revelation, or the reason of things.”
- III.—“That, if at any time hereafter, any principle or sentiment,
 by me taught or advanced, or by you admitted and embraced,
 shall, upon impartial and faithful examination, appear to you
 to be dubious or false, you either suspect, or totally reject such
 principle or sentiment.”

IV.—“That you keep your mind always open to evidence.—

That you labour to banish from your breast all prejudice, prepossession, and party-zeal.—That you study to live in peace and love with all your fellow-christians, and that you steadily assert for yourself, and freely allow to others, the unalienable rights of judgment and conscience.”

Is it possible to adjust the terms between a tutor and his pupils more equitably? But it must here be observed, that Dr. TAYLOR ever meant, the liberty he claimed for himself, and allowed to others, should be directed by a serious frame of mind, and a real desire to promote practical religion. The enlarged view he had of divine things penetrated his own heart, and had a manifest influence over his practice. He laboured to explain and vindicate the doctrines of Revelation for this reason, that he might most effectually serve the cause of vital Religion.

It were to be wished, that those who are students for the ministry, who choose to consult his writings, may imbibe the same spirit of genuine piety. This will be a never-failing source of weight and credit: and without it, other qualifications will be insufficient for religious improvement.

The Doctor's whole life being devoted to an impartial study of the Scriptures, not by way of speculation and amusement, but for the most valuable purposes to himself and others, it is no wonder to find him so earnestly recommending them to the serious attention of Christians. This is the important subject of those chapters, which immediately follow the Scheme of SCRIPTURE DIVINITY.

The Editor submits the whole (as the Author would have done) to the candor of every intelligent Reader; desiring that what is here advanced, may be regarded no further than shall appear conformable to truth and Scripture, in subserviency to the best interest of Mankind.

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A

S C H E M E

OF

SCRIPTURE-DIVINITY, &c.

C H A P. I.

Of CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

CH RISTIAN Theology, or Divinity, is the science which, from Revelation, teacheth the knowledge of God, namely, his nature and perfections, his relations to us, his ways and dispensations, his will with respect to our actions, and his purposes with respect to our being; in order to form in our minds right principles, for our direction and comfort, and in our conversation right practice for securing his favour and blessing.

In natural religion we take our proofs from the natures of things as perceived, considered, and compared by the human mind; but now we advance upon the authority and sense of writings and books; I mean, the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, acknowledged by the whole Christian world as a true revelation from God, and as the standard of faith and doctrine.

That God would reveal to us, by such ways as he in his wisdomudgeth most proper, such things as are needful for us to know and to do, for the improvement and happiness of our nature, is perfectly agreeable to his wisdom and goodness, who is our Father, and delighteth in our well-being; and is also perfectly suitable to our circumstances, inasmuch as mankind are ignorant and weak, and very liable to error and deception. It is consonant to the nature of things, that a father should instruct his child, and that persons of knowledge and learning should instruct the ignorant. How much more that God, whose understanding is infinite, and without whom we can know nothing at all, should instruct and instruct us all!

And that his instructions should be consigned to writing, is also very proper; as this, in fact, is the surest method of preserving them

in the world. Tradition from one generation to another is no safe conveyance. The experiment hath been sufficiently tried in the ages before the flood; wherein, though tradition was then greatly favoured by the longevity of mankind, yet we find, that both the Religion of Nature and traditionary Revelation were both so far lost, that in the space of 1656 years *the earth was filled with violence—for all flesh had corrupted his way upon earth.* Gen. vi. 11, 12. And both would have been entirely lost, had not God in an extraordinary manner interposed. Likewise after the flood, notwithstanding any tradition from *Noah*, idolatry soon overspread the nations, and rendered it expedient for God to devise a new constitution, to prevent a second universal corruption and apostacy. And so false and faithless is Tradition, that for many ages in the Jewish nation, and for many ages under the Gospel, Tradition was, and still is, so far opposed to Revelation, as to obscure and disparage it, and make the commandment of God therein of no effect. Insomuch, that had not a written Revelation by Divine Providence been introduced into the world, and preserved in it, true Religion would have been banished out of it.

The benefit of Revelation is very great: but then it must be faithfully used; otherwise it will be turned against itself, and made the patron of Falschood and Delusion. Which, in fact, hath been the case. Men, either weak or wicked, have perverted the Scriptures, and reduced them to a subserviency to either their lusts, or preconceived opinions. The latter was remarkably the case in the first ages of Christianity. When any of the Philosophers were converted to the Christian Profession, they generally brought along with them the schemes and notions of the particular sects to which they were attached; those influenced their minds in the study of the Scriptures, and inclined them to wrest the Scriptures into a consistency with their preconceived opinions. Hence it is, that many notions inconsistent with the word of God, and with each other, have been handed down to us from the earliest times under the sacred character of sound Christian Doctrine. And in our own times, we find men pleading the authority of Scripture for a variety of opposite and contradictory sentiments, which therefore cannot all of them be founded upon Scripture.

For the Holy Scriptures, being a Revelation from God, the most perfect and invariable standard of Truth, though written by different persons, living in remote ages, during the space of about 1500 years, from *Moses* to *John*, who wrote the Revelation; yet, being a Revelation from God, must be perfectly consistent in all their parts and principles, views and sentiments, express in uniformity of language. For if the language were multiform and various, the sense would necessarily be obscure, and the understanding confounded, and so the ends of Revelation would be defeated. And if, notwithstanding the great changes in customs, dispositions, interests, and religious sentiments, which must, and actually do happen in so long a tract of time, we do find, that one consistent scheme in one consistent uniform language, is carried on in all the writings which compose the Scriptures, we may strongly conclude, that they are a Revelation from God; not the produce of human wisdom, which could never in ages so remote, and for the greatest part so illiterate, have con-

hined to carry on a regular, uniform scheme of religious principles and sentiments, in the same language or modes of expression; but the inspiration or dictates of one Spirit, the Spirit of God. Hence it follows,

I. That in explaining the Scriptures, consistency of sense and principles ought to be supported in all the several parts thereof; and that, if any part be so interpreted as to clash with any other, we may be sure such interpretation cannot be justified. Nor can it otherwise be rectified, than by faithfully comparing Scripture with Scripture, and bringing what may seem to be obscure into a consistency with what is plain and evident.

II. The sense of Scripture can no otherwise be understood, than by understanding the force and import of Scriptural language. And the force and import of Scriptural language can be settled in no method more authentic, than by collating the several passages in which any phrase or expression occurs. Thus, in every view, Scripture is the best interpreter of Scripture.

III. Figurative expressions should be carefully distinguished from those that are literal; and *vice versa*. The oriental, and consequently the Scriptural tropes and figures of speech, are very bold, and different from the European.

IV. Single sentences are not to be detached from the places where they stand, but to be taken in connexion with the whole discourse. The occasion, coherence, and connexion of the writings, the argument that is carrying on, the scope and intent of the paragraph, are to be carefully attended to.

V. We should always interpret Scripture in a sense consistent with the laws of natural religion; or with the known perfections of God, and the notions of right and wrong, good and evil, which are discoverable in the works of creation, and in the present constitution of things. The language of Nature is most certainly the language of God, the sole author of Nature. And however the Divine Will may diversify the circumstances of supernatural Revelation, yet the law of Nature, as it is founded in the unchangeable natures of things, must be the basis and ground-work of every constitution of religion, which God had erected. Whence it follows, that the study and knowledge of natural Religion is a necessary introduction to the study and right understanding of Revelation. And we may further conclude that supernatural Revelation, in all its parts and principles, as it certainly is, so it always should be, interpreted and understood in perfect harmony with natural Religion, or the dictates of Reason.

But mistake me not; I do not mean, that the law or religion of Nature is commensurate to Revelation; or, that nothing is to be admitted in Revelation, but what is discoverable by the light of Nature, or by human Reason. So far from that, that the whole of Revelation, properly so called, could never have been discovered by human Reason. And therefore in matters of pure Revelation, it is a very false and fallacious way to begin first with what our Reason may dictate and discover; because our Reason, unassisted by Revelation, in such cases, can discover

nothing at all. For instance, the consequences of *Adam's* transgression upon his posterity; the covenant made with *Abraham*; the nature and mission of the Son of God; the grant of blessings, and of eternal life by him. Concerning those things, we could have known nothing at all, had not God revealed them to us. And in such matters of pure Revelation, the first thing we have to do, is to inquire, not what human Reason can discover, but what God has discovered, and declared in Scripture. But at the same time it is true, that God hath discovered nothing in Scripture inconsistent with what he has discovered in the nature of things exposed to the view of all mankind. And therefore, if we understand any thing in revealed religion, in a sense contradictory to natural religion, or to the known perfections of God, and the common notions of good and evil, which he hath written upon all our hearts, we may be sure we are in an error, and mistake the sense of Revelation.

I. He who would effectually study the word of God, ought, above all things, to be deeply sensible of the infinite value of true knowledge and wisdom; and how absolutely necessary it is to his eternal happiness, to cultivate and improve his intellectual powers, in the use of all those means which God hath put into his hands. The Scriptures are given us, not for amusement, or mere speculation, in perusing the curious remains of antiquity, the language, manners, and Theology of some celebrated ancients; but they are all, from beginning to end, pointed directly at our hearts and lives, to make us wise unto salvation. There we find every rule of the most consummate wisdom, and every principle of truth and comfort; and the whole is designed to refine our nature into its proper excellence, to guide us into the paths of purity, peace, and righteousness; to make us happy in ourselves, and a blessing to all about us; and finally to qualify us for the full enjoyment of God for ever.

But if we are cold and indifferent to any attainments in true wisdom; if we choose to dream, or jest and trifle away the important season of life, despising the glorious advantages we enjoy, while we eagerly pursue the low and transitory things of this world, in neglect of ourselves, of God, and immortality; of all that is truly great and good and excellent, we shall receive little or no advantage from any explications of the Holy Scriptures. We shall not value or relish them; we can have no ground to expect the divine blessing to assist our studies, but have reason to fear we shall be left to ourselves, to wander from God, from truth, and life, in deplorable ignorance and folly. Attend, therefore, to the voice of Divine Wisdom, *Prov. ii. 1, &c. My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments within thee, [lay them up as a treasure in thy heart] so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart unto understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding [as we do for those things, which we most of all desire, and most of all stand in need of] if thou seek her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures [as covetous men seek money, and ransack the whole world for the treasures, in which they delight: If thus you value, and study to advance the improvement of your minds in knowledge and wisdom] Then shalt thou understand the*

fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God [which of all understanding is infinitely the most excellent].

II. But this sense of the value of Divine Knowledge, and this desire to obtain it, must be understood in a connexion with a sincere endeavour to live agreeably to it. For should a person, under the greatest advantages of learning, and with the utmost assiduity study the Scriptures, he will be, after all, but a poor proficient in Divine Knowledge, if he do not bring it home to his heart, and reduce it to practice. It is not speculation, but practice and experience, which renders a man truly skillful in any business. So in Religion, no man can be truly wise and knowing, but he who liveth wisely and virtuously. *If ye continue in my word, (saith our Lord, Joh. viii. 31.) then shall ye know the truth, and the truth shall make you free* [from the darkness of ignorance and error, and the servitude of absurd lusts and passions]. *Joh. vii. 27. If any man will do his God's will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God.* [He shall see it in its true light, and be convinced that it is perfectly divine.] For (*Psal. xxv. 14.*) *the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant.* But (*Dan. xii. 10.*) *the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise [the pious and virtuous] shall understand.*

This is to make you sensible, that a sincere desire of true knowledge is a necessary disposition in entering upon the study of the Scriptures; and the obedience to God's commands, in the course of a pious life, is necessary to enlarge and establish the judgment in the knowledge of divine truths.

III. To the effectual study of Scripture, it is necessary, that our minds and hearts be unbiassed, unprejudiced, open to the truth, and always quite free to discern and receive it. If our spirits are under the power of prepossession and prejudice, we cannot be well disposed for searching the Scriptures. For instance, if a person, in matters of religion and conscience, is ambitious to gain reputation in the world, or solicitous only to please and recommend himself to a party, how should he study the word of God with the sincere and single view of discovering and embracing the truth, when he is pre-engaged, and all his care is to find what will please his fellow-creatures, and suit his own mean and selfish purposes? *Joh. x. 44. How can ye believe, who receive honour one of another, whose ruling principle is the desire of temporal honour, and the favour of men, and seek not the honour which comes from God only, the honour of a good conscience, and of upright conduct?* Or, if we resign our understandings and consciences to the authority of human decisions and decrees; or imbibe the bigotry of a party, which determines a person to retain pertinaciously a set of religious notions, without considering, or examining, how far they are agreeable to the word of God, our understandings and judgments are locked up, and no longer at liberty to discover the truth.

It is owing to this malignant cause, that great numbers of learned men, who call themselves Christians, will not allow themselves to make inquiry, whether the worship of saints, images, relicks, bread, and innumerable other absurd doctrines, and superstitious practices, are agreeable to the truth and purity of the Christian Religion. The error and

iniquity of this conduct in Papists we see and detest. But the same moral cause will in all cases produce the same effects. If we act upon the same vicious principles; if we indulge the like prejudices, and in the same manner wilfully shut our eyes, we shall be more faulty than Papists, because it is contrary to our profession, as Protestants; and shall be equally incapable of seeing the truth and glory of our holy Religion. In studying the Scriptures we should always keep our minds open to evidence, and further discoveries of truth; which is the only way to be more and more solidly established in our religious principles; for in no other way can we grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, this is the only possible mean of reducing the Christian world to unity both of hearts and sentiments.

II. Prayer to God, the Father of Lights, the Fountain of all Illumination, is necessary to the successful study of the Scriptures. *Prov. i. 6. The Lord alone gives wisdom; out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.* Nor hath he appointed any means, how excellent soever in themselves, which exempt us from a dependence upon his blessing. All our springs are in him; and his gracious influences render our endeavours, of any kind, successful. And therefore, when we address ourselves to the study of the holy Scriptures, we should make our supplication to God, that he would open our eyes, that we may behold wonderful things out of his law. Or, in the Apostle's words, (*Ephes. i. 17, 18.*) that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of Glory, would give unto us the spirit of wisdom, and revelation, in the knowledge of him; that the eyes of our understanding being enlightened, we may have just apprehensions of the riches of his wisdom and grace, and that our hearts may be duly impressed with a deep and lasting sense of them.

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Of the Divine Dispensations, in Scripture called the Ways and Works of GOD.

THE Ways of God *דרכי אלהים* frequently signify the Rules of Life, which he hath given us to observe. *Psalm cxix. 3. They also do no iniquity; they walk in his ways, i.e. in the law of the Lord.* ver. 14. And the Works *מעשר* of God may signify the mere operation and productions of his power. But both these words have a more restricted and emphatical signification. *Job i. 21. My Way, signifieth also a course of action, a custom, constitution or institution, which any person, or number of persons form to themselves.* *Prov. viii. 22. The Lord possessed me, Wisdom, in the beginning of his Way, before his Works of old.* *Prov. xii. 26. The way of the wicked, their course of action, seduceth them.* *Hos. x. 13. Because thou didst trust in thy way, the schemes and methods,*

methods, political or religious; of thy own devising, and in the multitude of thy mighty men. *Amos viii. 14.* The manner, the way, is the religious constitution, of *Beerfheba Livneh*, subsists, flourisheth, notwithstanding the opposition made to it. *Num. xxviii. 6.* *2 Chron. iii. 10.* *Psol. civ. 19.* *Eccl. iii. 11.* *1 Cor. xii. 18.* *1 Tim. iii. 15.* *2 Tim. i. 10.* *Tit. ii. 11.* *Heb. ix. 14.* *1 Pet. ii. 13.* *2 Pet. i. 12.* *1 John i. 1.* *2 John i. 1.* *3 John i. 1.* *Revel. i. 1.* *2.* *3.* *4.* *5.* *6.* *7.* *8.* *9.* *10.* *11.* *12.* *13.* *14.* *15.* *16.* *17.* *18.* *19.* *20.* *21.* *22.* *23.* *24.* *25.* *26.* *27.* *28.* *29.* *30.* *31.* *32.* *33.* *34.* *35.* *36.* *37.* *38.* *39.* *40.* *41.* *42.* *43.* *44.* *45.* *46.* *47.* *48.* *49.* *50.* *51.* *52.* *53.* *54.* *55.* *56.* *57.* *58.* *59.* *60.* *61.* *62.* *63.* *64.* *65.* *66.* *67.* *68.* *69.* *70.* *71.* *72.* *73.* *74.* *75.* *76.* *77.* *78.* *79.* *80.* *81.* *82.* *83.* *84.* *85.* *86.* 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Hence *Ways* and *Works* signify the appointments, constitutions, or Dispensations of God. By which are meant, "The schemes or methods devised or contrived by the wisdom and goodness of God, to discover, or shew himself, his nature and will, his beneficence, holiness and justice, to the minds of his rational creatures, for their instruction, discipline and reformation, in order to promote their happiness." These are the great ends of the Divine Dispensations; and these the principal points to be attended to, in the explications of them.

The great God, for ever to be adored, hath actually given existence to a world of moral agents, such as we are. He therefore is our Father, and we are his offspring, whom he hath created in love, that in right and virtuous use of our rational powers, we may be qualified for honour and enjoyment in the heavenly world. This seems to be the highest design the Divine Goodness can form, and the highest excellency which our nature can attain. And this may be considered as the basis of all the Divine Dispensations from the beginning of the world. For without pious and virtuous dispositions we cannot be qualified for honour and enjoyment. But pious and virtuous dispositions cannot be forced upon us, by any external power whatever; they must, in some degree, be the effect of our own attention and choice. It is, therefore, becoming the Father of our Spirits, and suitable to beings of our capacities and circumstances, that proper means be provided for our instruction and discipline. For instance, as God is not the object of any of our senses, and can be seen only by our understandings, it is proper that he should set before us, in the frame and furniture of the world, such visible and various displays of his Being, Power, Wisdom, Justice, and Kindness, as may engage our attention, discover his eternal Godhead, and lead us to the acknowledgment, adoration, love, and dutiful obedience of our Creator, Father, and Benefactor. These are the works, the dispensations, or constitutions of Nature; whereby our Father, as in a glass held before our eyes and thoughts, has shewn himself to us for our instruction in piety and virtue. But besides the constitution of universal Nature, there are a variety of dispensations, which are more immediately relative to mankind. As the being born of parents, to supply the several generations of the world, hence result sundry relations and duties; the being sustained by food, covered and sheltered by clothes and habitations, healed by physicians, taught by the learned and skilful; the infirmities, appetites, and passions of our constitution; the forming societies for mutual help and commerce; the institution of government, or the subordination of some to the authority of others, for preserving good order, for the protection of virtue, and the restraint and punishment of vice. Add to these, wars, pestilence,

lence, famine, earthquakes, and such like events; all these may be reckoned among the Divine Appointments, or Dispensations; some for the exercise of our rational powers in right action; some for discipline, correction, and reformation; but none merely for destruction, except where reformation cannot be effected.

But those Ways, or Dispensations, which in Scripture are considered as the great things of Divine Providence, on which his dealings with mankind have turned; or, as the principal events, by which the great purposes and councils of God's will have been executed, are chiefly to be attended unto. Because right conceptions of these, under their several views, circumstances, and connexions, will greatly contribute to the explaining of Scripture Theology, and also mark out the proper order and method, in which it may be studied. Let us therefore here, at first setting out, take a general survey of them.

I. The Creation of the World, as above.

II. The Formation of Man after the Image of God.

III. Man, being created capable of enjoying the honours and felicity of heaven, was to be disciplined and proved, in order to his being confirmed in the habits of virtue and holiness; without which, neither man, nor any other rational being, can be fit to see, or enjoy, the Lord. Accordingly, the first most remarkable of God's works, in the newly-created world, was to put the Man, whom he had formed, upon a trial suitable to his circumstances.

IV. Under which trial, man, yielding to temptation, sinned; and so became subjected to the threatening of eternal death.

V. Which heavy doom, God, not willing to destroy his creature, was pleased in mercy, not only to mitigate, but also, man having altered his moral state, thought fit to introduce a new dispensation of grace, in the hands of a Mediator; at the same time, subjecting the human race to a laborious life, to diseases, and to death temporal; and this, in much goodness, to subdue the fleshly Principle, to give a taste of the bitter fruits of sin, to prevent the opportunities and occasions of it; and, by increasing the vanity of the creature, to turn his regards more steadily to the all-sufficient Creator.

VI. But men multiplying in the earth, abused the grace of God, and in about 1656 years time became so wicked, that *all flesh had corrupted his way, and the earth was filled with violence.* Then, to purge the world from iniquity, and to recover it to a state of righteousness, God created a new thing in the earth, and, by a deluge of water, destroyed that wicked generation, preserving the only Family that remained uncorrupt in the old world, in order to propagate piety and virtue in the new. At the same time; and for the same good purposes, he reduced human life to much narrower bounds.

VII. Not long after the deluge, to prevent a second general corruption, God introduced another dispensation, by confounding the language of mankind; which divided the world into several distinct societies, and, consequently, kept them under a stricter government, and better preserved their liberties, than if the world had been one great Empire.

VIII. Thus the outrage of violence and rapine was, in a good measure, cured. But now mankind fall into a different iniquity, namely,

that of idolatry; whereby, within 400 years after the flood, the worship and knowledge of the one supreme God was in danger of being utterly lost. To prevent this, the Divine Wisdom erected a new dispensation by calling *Abraham* from among his idolatrous kindred, and constituting his family the storehouse and standard of divine knowledge. To them he spake and revealed himself at sundry times, and in divers manners, and separated them from the rest of the world, by peculiar laws and religious ceremonies, to secure them from the idolatrous practices of their neighbours. Thus they became God's peculiar people, distinguished above all other nations, but with a view to the future great benefit of all nations. And to this day, blessed be God, we experience the happy effects of this noble scheme, and owe to it both our Bible, and the very being of the Gospel church.

IX. The family of *Abraham*, by the divine conduct, was led into *Egypt*. And when they had been there, under grievous oppression, 215 years, and were grown numerous enough to be a nation, God set himself at the head of them, as their King. And, in a country much esteemed for learning and arts, whither men of genius and curiosity resorted from all other parts, upon this stage, so proper, because so public, God, as the king of *Israel*, combated the king of *Egypt*, and his fictitious gods, and displayed his infinitely superior power, both to destroy and to save, by many plagues inflicted upon the land of *Egypt*, and by bringing out the *Israelites* in opposition to all the forces of the king, and all the obstacles of nature, and settling them, after they had been sufficiently disciplined in the wilderness, in the land of *Canaan*. Here God set up his peculiar kingdom amongst them; and they alone of all the nations of the earth were the subjects of it, and happy in its singular privileges and blessings; but, at the same time, were exercised with various providential dispensations. The general rule of which, was this: while they adhered to the worship of the true God, they were always prosperous; when they declined to idolatry, they were either oppressed at home, or carried captive into other countries.

X. The long captivity in *Babylon* was not only a punishment to the *Jews*, but also a mean of publishing the knowledge of the true God over all the *Babylonish* empire, as appears very evidently in the Book of *Daniel*. And the division of the *Grecian* empire, which put an end to the *Persian*, after the death of *Alexander*, caused a new dispersion of the *Jews*, especially into *Asia minor*, *Syria*, *Egypt*, *Cyrene*, and *Lybia*, where their synagogues were very common. And lastly, when they were subjected to the *Roman* power, their God and religion became more known over all the *Roman* empire. Thus the way for the kingdom of the *Messiah* was gradually prepared. For though the knowledge of God, received from the *Jews*, made no public reformation of Pagan idolatry, yet it greatly disposed men to receive the Gospel when it should be preached unto them. Some became *Jews*, many renounced idolatry, and worshipped no other but the living and true God, who, in the Acts of the Apostles, are called, *devout Proselytes*, *Greeks*, *those that feared God*.

XI. Thus we are brought to the coming of *Christ*, who came in the fulness of Time; for he came as soon as God, by the various methods of his pro-

providence, had prepared the world to receive him. When God had made ready a people prepared for him, then Christ came, and fully explained the nature, laws, extent, and glory of the kingdom of God, and fulfilled the great and most excellent designs of divine wisdom, by giving himself a sacrifice and propitiation for the sin of the world.

XII. Then the great mystery of God, the calling of other nations, besides the Jews, into his kingdom and church, was opened, and made manifest by the preaching of the Gospel. For which purpose, he sent out his apostles, furnished with proper powers and credentials, especially the gift of tongues, whereby they were enabled to communicate the wonderful things of God to people of different countries. And by this means, the glad tidings of salvation, and the glorious light and privileges of the Gospel, have reached even to us in Great-Britain, who dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth.

XIII. But as Christ came to restore, to explain, and by the most glorious discoveries, and the richest promises, to enforce the law of nature, the true religion of all nations; and consequently, as his design was to erect an universal religion, which should recommend itself to all people, under their several political distinctions, and which, therefore, was to interfere with no political establishments, but should leave them, in every country, just as it found them, teaching the nations only to observe the eternal rules of righteousness in the hope of eternal life; I say, upon this grand, noble, and extensive plan, the Jewish polity would be sunk to a level with all other national governments; and the Jew, on account of any prior national advantages, would have no more claim to the blessings and privileges of the kingdom of God, than any of the Gentiles, or nations, who, in any of the most barbarous and despised parts of the earth, should receive the faith of the Gospel. For in the Christian religion there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ, i. e. the faith and obedience, or true religion, which Christ taught, is all, and in all, Col. iii. pr. Thus the Jew is fallen from his superior claims and privileges; and he falls by that very method of divine wisdom and grace, which brought salvation to all other nations. Thus the diminishing of the Jews is the riches of the world, and the casting away of them is the reconciling of the world, (Rom. xi. 12, 15.) or the opening a door for the whole world to come into the peculiar kingdom of God.

This is the idea we ought to have of the rejection of the Jews. The grace of God was, and still is, as free to them as to other people, upon their embracing the Gospel; but their political constitution from henceforth gave them no distinction, or privileges in the kingdom of God, above the rest of mankind. And in no long time after the publication of the Gospel, their polity and civil constitution, which otherwise would have remained in full force, and have obliged them to obey its laws, as much as the constitutions of the other kingdoms of the world obliged their several subjects, was quite overthrown, by the destruction of the temple, and the expulsion of the Jews out of the land of Canaan. Which they have not been able to recover, but remain dispersed over the face of the whole earth to this day. Thus the Gospel dispensation was erected, and spread and prevailed every where.

XIV. The next of God's works was the permitting and managing a grand apostacy and corruption of religion in the christian church, foretold by the Apostles, and at large in the book of the Revelation. After the apostles were removed out of the world, it pleased God to leave the professors of the Gospel, in matters of religion, to their own ignorance, passions and prepossessions. Thus the christian faith, by degrees, was depraved, till the *Man of Sin* arose, a tyrannical, usurped power, domineering over, and imposing upon conscience, forbidding the use of understanding, and intoxicating the inhabitants of the earth with false and delusive learning, worldly pomp and splendor, religious sorcery, and cruel persecution of the truth. This, as it was the properest mean of producing the most eminent and noblest characters, was to be a long and severe trial of the faith and patience of the saints. In the times of this sad dispensation, it is certain, we are now living; but, we hope, towards the latter end of it. Through the whole course of it God hath variously appeared, both in wrath upon the corrupters of religion, and in mercy for the comfort and support of those who opposed it. And thus the wheels of providence moved on, till the morning of reformation appeared in our happy land, which, for some centuries, hath been gradually advancing, and still continues to advance, towards the perfect day. For a spirit of religious liberty, which hath been long oppressed, revives and gains strength, the scriptures are more carefully studied, ecclesiastical tyranny and persecution, under every form, more generally detested; and things seem to have a tendency towards love, unity, and concord, the most perfect state of religion in this world.

XV. This must give pleasure to every good man, and he will cheerfully join his endeavours to bring on the next glorious dispensation, which we have in prospect, when the *mystery of God*, with regard to the afore said corrupt state of religion, shall be finished; when *Babylon*, in all its principles and powers, shall fall; when *the holy city, the new Jerusalem*, shall come down from Heaven, and God shall set up a pure and happy state of the church.

XVI. How long that state will continue, we do not certainly know. Nor have we any further clear discoveries of God's works till the awful day of the resurrection, when the Lord himself shall in person descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch-angel, and the trump of God. Then all they that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, and shall be judged, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. And they that be wise, under any of the changes and dispensations of this present world, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that work together with God, and endeavour to turn many to righteousness, as the stars, for ever and ever.

Thus I have given a sketch of the works of God from the beginning of the world to the consummation of all things. And very beautiful and surprising would the whole appear, could we see them in a full and clear light. But before we attempt a more particular explication of them in their several views, circumstances, and connexions, we must make a few general remarks, which will assist our conceptions and inquiries.

C H A P. III.

GENERAL REMARKS upon the DIVINE DISPENSATIONS:

CONCERNING the foregoing dispensations, we may in general remark, that as they are devised and executed by God—

I. They are all agreeable to the most perfect rules of righteousness and truth. Nothing false, unjust, or injurious, can be charged upon the divine constitutions. For (*Deut. xxxii. 4.*) *all God's ways are judgment; a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he.* *Psal. cxlv. 17.* *The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and holy, steadily acting according to truth, in all his works.* See also *Rev. xv. 3.* And therefore they are in perfect consistence with each other.

II. The ways of God are not to be considered as the effect of necessity, as if the end proposed could not possibly have been otherwise gained; but as the result of wise choice, or divine prudence, preferring such particular methods as preferable to any other, as best adapted to our circumstances, or, all things considered, as the most likely to make mankind wise and happy. For instance, it is by the dispensation of God, that our present life is sustained by food; not because it is impossible we should live in any other way, for God could sustain our life in perfect health and strength by an act of his own immediate power. Again, our food is produced by the influence of the sun, by rain, the fertility of the ground, human labour and skill; not because food could not be otherwise produced, for God could, by an immediate act of his own power, create food for us every day, as he did for the *Israelites* in the wilderness; but this method of sustaining our life is a contrivance of divine wisdom, to shew himself to our understandings, (for, had we been sustained by an immediate act of divine power, we should have been led to imagine, that, not God, but our own nature, had sustained itself) and to exercise our virtue and industry in providing a subsistence, and to be mutually helpful to each other. Hence the works of God, in scripture, are assigned to his wisdom. See *Psal. civ. 24. Prov. viii. 22. Ephes. i. 5, &c.—iii. 9, 10.*

III. Assuredly all the dispensations of God are calculated to promote virtue and happiness. This is the line which runs through the whole, as will appear in our future inquiries into the nature and tendencies of each of them. At present it may suffice to observe, that, however our circumstances may differ from those of our first parents, the end of our being is the same as theirs; and we, as well as they, are upon trial, in order to our having the habits of holiness formed in us, and our being fitted for eternal life. And though it is a sad reflection to consider, how the wickedness of men hath from time to time fatigued the patience of God, yet it must give us pleasure to observe, how his goodness hath applied various remedies to prevent, or heal, the corruptions of mankind. In what way soever men have gone astray from him, his wisdom hath never been at loss to find out the most proper expedients to reclaim them.

Evidently his design is to save a sinful world, and to carry religion, both in its personal influences, and general prevalence, to the highest perfection our present condition will admit (a).

IV. The scriptural dispensations, which have been enumerated, were severally adapted to the then capacities and improvements, the moral state and circumstances of mankind. The several ages of the world may be compared to the several stages of human life, infancy, youth, manhood, and old-age. Now, as a man under due culture gradually improves in knowledge and wisdom, from infancy to old-age; so we may conceive of the world, from the beginning to the end, as gradually improving in mental and religious attainments under the several divine dispensations (b). Which dispensations have been in every period suited to the improvements in knowledge and wisdom, which then subsisted in the world. Adam, when created, may be considered as a child without knowledge, learning, and experience; and therefore the dispensation he was under, was very different from that which we are under, who enjoy the benefit and light of so many preceding dispensations.

COROLLARY. A preceding dispensation is intended and adapted to introduce and prepare for that which comes after it. Experience is a natural and certain mean of improving in knowledge and wisdom. This is universally true, as well with regard to communities as single persons. It is therefore agreeable to the nature of things, that in a progressive course of knowledge, and moral improvement, what we already have experienced should be a step to further advances; and consequently, in a just plan or scheme of discipline, it is fit, that what goes before, should be adapted to clear and establish what is to come after. Thus mankind, reflecting upon preceding dispensations, will be admonished and directed to reform old errors and corruptions; and thus, even the monstrous apostacy of the church of Rome may serve to introduce and establish that most perfect state of Christianity, which we expect will succeed the dispensation we are now under.

V. All God's dispensations are in a moral way, and adapted to the nature of rational agents. *Exod. xiii. 17.* Force and co-action destroy the

(a) Now, if such a design shall appear evidently to run through the Books of the Old and New Testament, a man may, with infinitely greater propriety, suppose the most perfect drama (where the finest design is carried on by the best chosen plot, and by the most consistent underplots, and beautiful, well-proportioned incidents) to have been writ by a number of the greatest madmen or idiots, by piece-meal, in different ages; than imagine a thread of such an end and mean running through above 40 writers, in more than 1600 years, to be the work of so many enthusiasts. Or, we may as well suppose the world to be framed by mere chance; or the most magnificent, beautiful, and convenient palace, that the imagination can figure to itself, to be built by men unacquainted with all the rules of architecture, in several distant ages, and without any model to build by, and to be supported by mere chance, through many more; as imagine such an unity of design and mean, as I have described, to be the result of enthusiasm and accident mixed together. *See Harrington's Essay on the Div. Dispensations, Part I. Preface, p. 26.*

(b) Ages of a Man. 6. 16. 20. 30. 40. 50. 60. 70.
Ages of the World. 600. 1600. 2000. 3000. 4000. 5000. 6000. 7000.

the very nature of holiness; and therefore all divine methods of reformation are so wisely adjusted, as to leave human actions in their proper state of freedom. By none of his works did God ever intend to render wickedness impracticable; and he hath always provided sufficient supports for integrity and virtue. With this very sentiment prophecy in *Daniel* and in the *Revelation* is sealed up. *Rev. xxii. 11. He that is unjust, let him be unjust still; and he that is filthy, let him be filthy still.* That is to say, there is no cure for the obstinately blind and wicked; neither are the ways of God intended to purify those, who will not be made clean; but, after all that God hath done, the wicked (*Dan. xii. 10.*) shall be left to do wickedly. And none of the wicked will understand, but only the wise will understand. But he that is righteous, let him be righteous still; and he that is holy, let him be holy still. *Hos. xiv. 9. Who is wise, and [for] he shall understand these things? Prudent, and [for] he shall know them? For the ways of Jehovah are right; and the just shall walk in them; but the transgressors shall fall in them.* The sincere and upright, who choose the way of truth, or turn from sin unto righteousness, the righteous and merciful God will never forsake. They make a wise improvement of his dispensations, and, under all trials and difficulties, he will guide and support them; and their path shall be as the shining light, that shineth more and more to the perfect day.

COROLLARY. Hence we may conclude—That in computing the progress of religion, under any dispensation, the quantity of knowledge and religion is to be measured only by the improvement of the righteous; and that the wicked, how many soever, are not to be taken into the account, as making any deductions from it. Or, the advances of knowledge and religion, under any dispensation, are not to be estimated by numbers, but by the proficiency of single persons, how few soever. *Noah*, a single person, was, at the time of the deluge, the true standard of religious improvement in that age; though all the rest of mankind were exceeding corrupt and wicked.

VI. Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world, saith the apostle *James*, *Acts xv. 18.* Then all God's works were formed and planned in his counsels, and lay under his eye in one comprehensive view; and therefore must be perfectly consistent. One uniform scheme must be laid, and one even thread of design must run through the whole. They are not the result of sudden, incoherent thoughts; but a well digested plan, formed upon the most just principles by him who seeth all his works from the beginning to the end. Whence it follows, that if we do not discern one coherent design in the divine dispensations, or if we make any one part clash with the rest, we may be sure we do not understand them. Goodness was the principle of creation. God made man, because he delighted to communicate being and happiness. Consequently goodness and fatherly love, which was the beginning and foundation of God's works, must run equally through them all, from first to last.

VII. Previous notice was given of some of the principal dispensations either for warning, or to prepare men for the reception of them. The deluge was preached by *Noah* 120 years before it came to pass. The Jewish dispensation was predicted to *Abraham* 430 years beforehand. *Jeremiah* foretold the Babylonish captivity; and *Paul*, and *John* at last

predict and describe the grand apostacy. But the coming of the *Messiah*, and the gospel dispensation, run through the whole, from the beginning to the end, in a less or clearer degree of light. And it was fitting that this, which is the chief of God's works, should receive the brightest evidence from prophecy. And therefore it was not fit it should be introduced till such time as it had received that evidence; which in Scripture is called *the fulness of time*. Gal. iv. 4.

VIII. The dispensations of God are intended for our contemplation and study; and it is a singular advantage to form right notions of them, because they will tincture our conceptions of God, and influence our dispositions towards him. If we judge truly of God's works, we shall have agreeable and lovely ideas of the workman. His wisdom, his goodness and truth, will stand in a fair light, and we shall confess him infinitely worthy of our highest regard. Then we shall think of God with admiration, pleasure and delight, (*Psal. xcii. 4. Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work; I will triumph in the works of thy hands*) and shall serve and follow him with willing minds. But if we form such conceptions of the ways of God, as represent them to be arbitrary and tyrannical, inconsistent with all our notions of justice and goodness, the effect of sovereign will, without either reason or love, he must stand before our thoughts in the most frightful colours. The most horrible gloom will be drawn over the perfections of the best of beings; our minds will be filled with darkness and dread; and, if we worship him at all, our worship and obedience will not be the free and generous duty of sons, but the joyless constrained drudgery of slaves.

IX. It must be remembered, that the works of God are unsearchable, and past our finding out to perfection. *Psal. xcii. 5. O Lord, how great are thy works, and thy thoughts are very deep!* From a just sense of the inscrutability of the divine dispensations, the apostle concludes a discourse upon the rejection of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles, with this solemn exclamation: *O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* Rom. xi. 33. It becomes us to admire and adore the counsels of infinite wisdom, and to acquiesce where we cannot gain a full knowledge of them. *Rev. xv. 3. Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty!* We cannot comprehend the ways of God in their fullest extent, in all their largest views, and remotest connexions. He therefore that is wise will not cavil at them, nor foolishly endeavour to pry into them beyond the bounds of revelation, and of human understanding.

X. But under all our present darkness, and under every dispensation, an honest heart, sincerely desirous to know the truth, seriously inquisitive after it, meekly submissive to what God hath revealed and commanded, willing to work together with him, patiently persevering in well doing; such a temper, and such a conduct, is the best and safest guide under every dispensation; will enable us to follow God, to comply with every design of his providence, to overcome in every hour of trial, and will lead us to eternal life. To such a character, as well as to *Daniel*, (*Chap. xii. 13.*) it is the language of divine grace—*But walk thou, thou honest, upright man, walk thou thy way to the end, take courage and*

comfort, walk on, persevere in the path of truth and integrity; for, after all the trials and disquietudes of this world, *thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot, the lot of pious and faithful souls, at the end of the days.*

C H A P. IV.

Of the CREATION.

Gen. i. 1—26.

THIS is the work of creation. To *create* is to give Being to that which did not exist before; and so, is no contradiction. That a thing should *be and not be at the same time*, is a contradiction and impossibility; but that a thing should exist now, which did not exist before, is no more a contradiction, than that my hand should move now, which did not move before.

That there is one first uncaused Cause, from which all other beings derive their existence, and upon whom they have their entire dependence, hath already been proved. Consequently, all beings, except the first Cause, must have been produced, or brought into being, by the power and agency of the first Cause. Not produced, out of nothing, but out of nothing besides the immense and unconceivable fulness of the self-existent Being, who must have in himself the power and possibility of all being; though we cannot comprehend or conceive in what manner, or by what kind of agency, he createth or communicateth existence to beings distinct from himself.

Of the Creation of all things, *Moses* in this chapter has given us a summary account; not in a precise philosophical manner, but so as to give the men of that age in which he wrote, just and affecting notions of this first and most stupendous work of God, so far as was necessary to the purposes of true religion, and no further. It is enough, therefore, that his account is true, so far as it goes, and not in any respect inconsistent with the most accurate discoveries which have been made in later ages concerning the system of the universe, or any part of it.

Ver. 1. *In the beginning, &c.* The heavens and the earth may comprehend the whole universe, or *all things visible and invisible*. It doth not therefore follow, that the whole universe was created all together at once, or at some one period of time. But the meaning is this; at first, when the universe was produced, it was brought into being by the sole power and wisdom of the almighty and eternal God. This is true, though the several parts of the universe may have been produced at different times, or at any distance of time from each other; and though God may still be creating new worlds in the immense bosom of space, which is not improbable: I say, it is true, that in the beginning of their existence, whenever that was, God created, and is still creating, them.

all; the sentiment which *Moses*, I apprehend, would inculcate being this, that the whole universe of beings, whenever created, doth not exist by necessity or chance; but had a beginning, and was produced by the sole power of God.

But, as *Moses* here gives us a particular account of the formation of our earth, this phrase, *in the beginning*, may have a special reference to the time when our earth was created. The matter of which it consists, was produced in the state of a *Chaos*, (Ver. 2.) *without form and void*, i. e. shapeless, waste, and useless; all the parts, solids and fluids, jumbled together, and surrounded with darkness, unadorned, uninhabited. But *the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters*; i. e. the influences and exertions of the divine power actuated this dark, confused mass, and digested, and reduced its parts to the beautiful state and order in which we now behold them.

On the first day, and the first thing after the production of the *Chaos*, the element of light was created. Ver. 3, 4, 5.

On the second day was created the element of air, or that body of air which we call the Atmosphere, *הַרְקִיעַ* the *firmament*, or rather, spacious expansion of air, where the fowls do fly, (Ver. 20.) and which is spread abroad above, and all round the earth, including meteors and clouds, which are the waters above, or at the upper part of, the atmosphere, in contradistinction to the waters of the sea and rivers, which are under it. Ver. 6, 7, 8.

On the third day the great God formed the element of water, by raining off the fluids of the *Chaos*, and causing them to flow into large cavities prepared to receive them; that thus the earth might become firm, compact, voluble globe, and in a fit condition to produce grass, herbs, trees, and plants, which were then created. Ver. 9, 10, 11, 12.

On the fourth day God created the sun and moon. Ver. 14—19. The sun being the centre of our system, it seems probable that the whole solar system was produced at the same time with the earth, though the design of the writer did not lead him to take notice of the other parts of it. But we have no just ground, from his account, to suppose that all the stars, which are probably each of them the centre of a distinct system, were, on this day, all of them created. Most of them might have been created long before, and some of them since, our world came into being. For that clause (Ver. 16.) *he made the stars also*, in the Hebrew is no more than, *and the stars*; the words *he made* being inserted by the translators. And therefore it may be well rendered thus—Ver. 16. *And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night with the stars*. That is to say, *the moon and stars to rule the night*, as it is expressed, *Psal. cxxxvi. 9*. The conjunction *and* sometimes hath the force of the preposition *with*; as *Gen. iv. 3*. *With his weapons*. *2 King. xi. 8*. *Jer. xxii. 7*. &c.

Hitherto our globe, and perhaps the other planets, might, by the power of God, be suspended in the empty space, in a state of rest. But now, when the sun, the centre of our system, was created, and the earth was reduced to a proper state of firmness and solidity, they might be thrown into those regular and rapid motions, about the sun,

and their own centres, which, by the same power impressed upon them, continue to this day; and by their exact periodical revolutions produce that grateful and necessary variety of day and night and seasons; namely, spring and summer, autumn and winter; which are certainly the effect of the annual and diurnal motions of the earth; and therefore the annual and diurnal motions might on this day commence. *Ver. 14.*

On the fifth day, fish and fowl; on the sixth day, beasts and man were created. *Ver. 20, &c.*

There is one difficulty remaining, namely, that *light* was created before the sun, *Ver. 3, 14, &c.* Whereas the sun is supposed to be the sole fountain of light, by emitting luminous particles from its body. But I suspect the truth of this hypothesis; and *Moses* may be found a more accurate philosopher than is commonly imagined. It appears from electrical experiments, that light is a distinct substance from all other, as much as air is from water; and that, by being properly excited, it may be made to appear in midnight darkness. Which shews, that it did exist in that darkness, previously to its being excited; and that it was rendered visible by being excited. Consequently it may, and, I doubt not, doth exist, expanded through the whole visible system of things at all times, by night as well as by day; and that the sun, a fiery body, is, in our system, the great exciter, by which the substance of light is impelled, and becomes visible. For, were there no substance of light previously existing throughout the whole system, no light would appear, though ten thousand suns should at once be placed in our hemisphere. Just as the ringing of the bell produces sound, not by an emanation of particles from the substance of the bell, but by exciting the air, or the sounding substance, without which the bell could produce no sound at all. As the air will not sound, so the light will not appear without being excited*. Upon this

* This hypothesis, I presume, doth not interfere with any rules of optics, the rays of light being *excited* according to the same laws and directions by which they are supposed to be *emitted*. The light of a candle, upon an eminence, may be seen at least three miles at sea, in a dark night. Therefore according to the common supposition, the flame of a candle, suppose of one inch diameter, must emit from its body instantaneously, and in every instant while it continues to burn, as much luminous matter, or substance, as will fill a spherical space of six miles in diameter, or of 113,0976 cubical miles, which, notwithstanding the divisibility of matter *in infinitum*, seems to me to be incredible. It is surely more probable and rational to suppose, that the extremely agile particles of light, which fill that large space, are actuated, and excited instantaneously by the luminous body.

N. B. Dr. TAYLOR, some time after he had finished this scheme of scripture divinity, met with the same thought and reasoning in the ingenious author of NATURE DISPLAYED; and was not a little pleased to find an hypothesis, which he judged peculiar to himself, adopted by so deep an inquirer into nature.

That the curious reader may compare the passages, he is presented with the following extract.

“—* Light is visibly pre-existent to luminous bodies: this may seem a paradox at first sight, but it is not therefore a less evident truth.—By light

supposition the element or substance of light was created on the first day, and the divine power alone might be the exciter, which made the light appear

we do not mean that sensation which we experience in ourselves, on the presence of any illuminated body, but that inconceivably subtle matter, which makes an impression on the organs of sight, and paints on the optic nerve those objects from the surfaces of which it was reflected to us. Light then, taken in this sense, is a body quite different from the sun, and independent on it, and might have existed before it, seeing now it does exist in its absence, as well as when present. It is diffused from one end of the Creation to the other, traverses the whole universe, forms a communication between the most remote spheres, penetrates into the inmost recesses of the earth, and only waits to be put in a proper motion to make itself visible.—Light is to the eye what the air is to the ear: Air may not be called the body of sound, and it does equally exist all round us, though there be no sonorous body to put it in motion; so likewise the light does equally extend at all times, from the most distant fixed stars, to us, though it then only strikes our eyes, when impelled by the sun, or some other mass of fire.

The difference betwixt the propagation of sound and light consists in this, that the air, which is the vehicle of sound, being, beyond all comparison, more dense than the vehicle of light, its motion is much slower. Hence we may account for that common phenomenon, why we do not hear the sound of the first stroke of a hammer, when at a distance from it, till it is at the point of giving the following blow; whereas light is propagated with incredible swiftness, though at some small distance of time between its receiving the impulse, and its communicating it to us; seven minutes, according to Sir ISAAC NEWTON's calculation, being sufficient for its passage from the sun down to us. This difference of velocity between the progressive motion of light, and that of sound, is sensibly demonstrated by firing a gun in a large open plain, where the spectator, at a great distance from it, will perceive the flash a considerable time before he hears the noise.

The body of light therefore does either exist independently of the luminous body, and only waits to receive a direct impulse from it, in order to act upon the organ of vision; or we must suppose that every luminous body, whether it be the sun, a candle, or a spark, does produce this light from itself, and project it to a great distance from its own body. There is no medium between these two suppositions, and either the one or the other must be true. But to assert the latter, is to assert a very great improbability; for if a spark, which is seen in every part of a large room, fifty cubick feet in dimensions, emits from its own substance a quantity of light sufficient to fill the whole room, then there must issue from that spark, which is but a point, a body, the contents of which are fifty cubick feet. How incredible the supposition!

Suppose the lantern on the light-house of *Messina*, to be seen only eight cubick leagues, of which itself is the centre; it will follow, that an eye placed in any point of those six cubick leagues will discern it, and consequently so much space will be filled with the light of it. Now how incredible that a little fire, some few inches in diameter, should diffuse around it a substance capable of filling eight cubick leagues! Suppose the lantern concealed, and the light immediately disappears; let it be uncovered the moment after, and it will instantly be seen as far as before, and

appear for the three first days of creation, until the sun, the instrumental exciter, was produced.

Further, we must remark, that although God is here said to create the world, yet it may be true, that he employed a subordinate agent in the formation of it; namely, the Son of God, who afterwards came into the world for the redemption of mankind. See *John* i. 2, 3. *Col.* i. 15, 16, 17. *1 Cor.* viii. 5, 6. But though he was the instrumental cause, yet it is true, that God made all things, because our Lord acted by a power derived from him. *He that hath built all things is God.* *Heb.* iii. 4.

So much for critical remarks. The subject naturally leads to the following reflections.

“ These are thy glorious Works, Parent of Good!

“ Almighty, thine this universal Frame,

“ Thus wonderful fair; thyself how wonderful then!

How wonderful, how immense is the power, goodness, and wisdom, which gave existence to the stupendous fabric and furniture of the universe!

I. POWER. How vast and mighty is the arm which stretched out the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth! which sustains numberless worlds, of amazing bulk, suspended in the unmeasurable and unconceivably distant regions of empty space; and steadily directs their various rapid and regular motions! Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created all these things. He bringeth out all their hosts by number, he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in Power, not one of them faileth. *Isai.* xl. 26. How powerful was the command, Let there be light, and there was light—Let there be a firmament, &c. By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded

“ consequently fill eight cubick leagues of space with fresh light: then
“ how many times eight cubick leagues of luminous matter, will all the suc-
“ cessive instants of illumination produce in one night's time! Sure nothing
“ was ever more inconceivable.

“ On the contrary, how simple and natural is it to suppose, that as the air
“ existed before the bell that put it in motion, and caused it to vibrate into
“ sound, so, in like manner, the light existed round the fire of *Messina*, before
“ the lantern was illuminated, and only waited to be put in motion by the
“ fire, in order to make an impression on the eyes of the mariners. The sun
“ and stars do, by the same means, make themselves visible, without suffering
“ any diminution of their substance, by continual emanations of luminous
“ matter into those vast regions of space through which we behold them;
“ God having placed between those luminous globes and us, the body of
“ that light which we see, and which is impressed on the organs of vision,
“ by their action and influence; but does not proceed from them, nor owes
“ its existence to them.—The account of *Moses* therefore, as to this par-
“ ticular, is agreeable to truth, as well as an useful lesson of caution, when
“ he informs us, that God, and not the sun, was the author and parent of
“ light, and that it was created by his almighty fiat before there was a sun
“ to dart it on one part of the earth, and a moon to reflect it on the other.”

manded, and it stood fast. *Psal. xxxiii. 6, 9.* Thus the Scriptures sublimely express the exertion of the divine Power in Creation; as if it were done instantaneously, and with as little difficulty as speaking a word.

II. And as for GOODNESS, what an infinite fulness of life and being, what an immense, inexhaustible treasury of all Good, must that be, from whence all this life and being was derived! How infinitely rich is the glorious and eternal God! Out of his own fulness he hath brought worlds and worlds, replenished with myriads and myriads of creatures, furnished with various powers and organs, capacities and instincts; and out of his own fulness continually and plentifully supplieth them with all the necessities of existence. And still his fulness remaineth the same, unemptied, unimpaired; and he can yet bring out of his fulness worlds and worlds without end. How immensely full of all life and being is the glorious and eternal God! Thus he is good in himself. *And he doth good.* He is kind and beneficent, willing to communicate being and good. How profuse is his bounty! He might have kept, as I may say, the whole of existence to himself; but he has liberally shared it out among his creatures; and of all his creatures in this world, the most liberally to us men. Survey the whole of what may be seen in and about this globe, and say, if our Maker hath a sparing and niggardly hand; say, if we have a churlish and unkind father. Certainly it is his pleasure to form creatures, and furnish them with enjoyment; and therefore *his tender mercies must be over all his works.*

III. His WISDOM appears illustrious in the variety, beauty, exactness, order, and harmony, in which God hath formed and fixed the universe; in the several capacities and degrees of excellence he has conferred upon his creatures; the proper stations he hath assigned to them; the subordination and subserviency of one to another, which he hath established, for the regularity and well-being of the whole. They are all, as they come out of his hands, just what they should be, adjusted in the exactest proportions to their several ends and connexions; all in every part and respect shewing the workmanship of the profoundest skill, and most curious art. The utmost stretch of human understanding can reach but a small part of God's works; but they who study the wisdom of Creation, cannot but admire, and use the words of the sacred penman, *Psal. civ. 24.* (where he is surveying the several parts of our globe) *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In Wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches!*

These reflections will (1) inspire the most elevated sentiments of the most high and mighty Creator, who is exalted infinitely above the heavens, his glory is above all the earth, *Psal. cviii. 5.* *The Lord our God is very great, he is clothed with honour and majesty;* and we should study to magnify him in our hearts by the most raised conceptions of his transcending greatness. (2.) This should also fill our minds with joy, and our mouths with his high praises. This God is our God, our maker, and therefore our father. The first and most proper notion we ought to entertain of the great God is, that of a Father; our Father, and the Father of the whole universe. And greatly should we be delighted with the displays of our Father's infinite power, wisdom, and goodness. Trans-

ported with joy, by an elegant prosopopœia, the Psalmist, in the 148th Psalm, calls upon all creatures to praise God; wishing, in effect, that they had all of them understandings and tongues to declare how much skill and kindness he has shewn in their formation and establishment. Joy and praise are the Creator's due, and should be our constant temper and practice. (3.) He who is the maker, is also the absolute proprietor, Lord, and Sovereign of all things; and therefore hath the first and highest right to our reverence, submission, and obedience; in which he is infinitely able to support us in opposition to all human power and authority. For *all Power*, not only his own inherent power, but also the Power of all created beings, *belongs to God*. From him it is originally derived, and the exercise of it depends entirely upon his will and pleasure; nor, in any instance, can it possibly act beyond the limits which he prescribes. Therefore, in the way of duty, relying upon his all-sufficiency, we need not fear what man can do unto us. (4.) In our present situation we are liable to many difficulties and distresses, from which we are not able to guard or extricate ourselves; but the almighty Creator is infinitely able to deliver his servants from any danger, and can clear a passage through all embarrassments. He can make a way even in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters. (5.) He who from his own inexhaustible fulness hath brought forth all worlds and creatures, is our shepherd; he careth for us, and can fully supply all our wants. (6.) He can fully accomplish all the great and glorious things revealed in the Gospel. He can raise us from the dead, change our vile bodies, and clothe us with immortal honour and glory. This should not seem to us incredible, because he hath already performed things as incredible, and we have constantly exposed to our view effects of his Power no less wonderful.

CH A P. V.

Of the CREATION of MAN.

Gen. i. 26, to the End.

NOW we are come to the formation of *Man*. Here, observe, the language of the Creator is altered. Instead of, *Let there be Men*, God said, (*Ver. 26.*) *Let us make Man*, or, we will make Man, *in our image, after our likeness*. Q. d. "Now we have formed and furnished the earth, let us make Man, the noblest of our works, to inhabit, cultivate, and enjoy it." The superior excellency of the human nature is signified by the distinguished manner in which God is represented as addressing himself to the formation of Man.

The plural number is used [*And God said, let us make Man*]; but according to the genius of the Hebrew language, this is only a magnificent way of expressing the majesty of God; and amounts to no more than this, *And God said, I will make Man*. So Gen. xi. 7. *Go to, let us go down, &c.*

I will

I will go down. Thus God is called our *Makers*, Job xxxv. 10. Psal. cxlix. 2. *Thy Creators*, Eccl. xii. 1. *Thy makers is thy husbands*, Isai. liv. 5. which are all to be understood, and are rendered in the singular number. "Nouns appellative denoting dominion, according to the Hebrew idiom, are put in the plural instead of the singular." Should it be supposed, that the great God here speaks to some other being or beings besides himself, it must be to some subordinate beings; for neither this, nor any other passage of scripture, can justly be explained inconsistently with the unity, simplicity, or singleness of the divine nature.

Ver. 26. Let us make Man in our own Image, [Heb. in the sketch or shadow of us] after, or like, our Likeness. These words, with respect to God, are diminutive, and denote that the most perfect endowments of the human nature are but a sketch, a shadow, or something resembling the Likeness of God. And yet, with respect to other creatures on earth, it speaks high distinction, and superiority. For this sketch of the Image of God in Man must include, 1. The noble faculties of his mind; understanding and will, or freedom of choice, for the government of all his actions and passions, and his continual improvement in wisdom, purity, and happiness. 2. His dominion over the inferior creatures, expressly mentioned, *ver. 26, 28.* By which he is God's Representative, or Viceroy upon earth.

But divines have understood this Image of God, as consisting in righteousness and true holiness; which they affirm, were *created with Adam*. Meaning, not that *Adam* was created with such powers as rendered him capable of acquiring righteousness and holiness, but that he was *made* in this Image of God; it was *concreated* with him, or *wrought into his nature*, at the same time that it was created; and so belonged to it as a natural faculty or instinct. This they call *original righteousness*, which they ground principally upon the two following passages. Col. iii. 9, 10. *Lye not one to another, seeing that you have [by your Christian profession] put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the Image of him that created him.* Ephes. iv. 22, 23, 24. *That ye put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts: and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.* All this is supposed to relate to *Adam's* being originally created in the Image of God.

The *old man*, say they, is a corrupt nature derived from *Adam*; and the *new man*, is fallen man restored to the primitive temper, or to that righteousness and holiness in which they suppose *Adam* was created. But this is wide of the Apostle's sense. It is not uncommon with him to compare the Christian church to a man, or the human body, of which *Christ* is the head, and we are all of us members in particular. The *new man* was created, when God erected the Gospel Dispensation, and *broke down the middle Wall of Partition between us Jews and Gentiles, [Ephes. ii. 13, 14, 15, 16.] for to make to himself, in the Gospel, of twain, or of the two parties, believing Jews and Gentiles, one new man, or the new constitution and community, under the Gospel.* To this *new man*, the *old man* is directly opposed; and therefore must signify the Gentile state or community, headed by *Satan*, to which, before their conversion,

version, they were joined. This is confirmed by the Apostle, *Ephes. iii. 11. Wherefore remember, that ye being in time passed GENTILES in the flesh, &c.* And chap. iv. 17, &c. *This I say — that ye walk not as other GENTILES walk, &c.* They formerly belonged to the old man, the body of impure, idolatrous heathen; but now they had, by their Christian profession, put off this old man, together with all his wicked deeds, Col. iii. 9, 10, and had put on the new man, or were joined to the Christian church, or community. And therefore, they were obliged to be renewed in the spirit of their minds, and to live in knowledge [true wisdom], or in righteousness and true holiness. For God created the new man, or constituted the Christian church, in wisdom and righteousness and holiness, after his own Image, or the rectitude of his nature, with this design, to promote the same rectitude among men. For (*Ephes. ii. 10.*) *we, the new Man, or the whole body of Christians, are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God ordained, when he formed the Gospel Scheme, that we should walk in them.*

But what hath this to do with Adam's being created in righteousness and true holiness? Which, in the nature of things, could not be created, or wrought into his nature at the same time he was made; because such a righteousness would have been produced in him without his knowledge and consent; and so would have been no righteousness at all. For whatever is wrought in my nature without my knowledge and choice, cannot possibly be either sin or virtue in me, because it is no act of mine; but must be a mere natural instinct, like the industry of the bee, or the fierceness of the lion. Righteousness is right action, directed by knowledge and judgment; but Adam could neither act, nor know, nor judge, before he and all his intellectual powers were created; and therefore he must exist and use his intellectual powers, before he could be righteous and holy.

We may further observe — That God made the first pair male and female, that they might multiply and inhabit the whole earth, and supply a perpetual succession of men and women, pronouncing a blessing upon the regular propagation of the human species, *ver. 28. And God blessed them, &c.* But this blessing, divines have supposed, was turned into a curse, by Adam's transgression; which so corrupted the human nature, that thereby and thenceforth we all come into the world under the wrath and curse of God. But that this also is a mistake, is most evident from *Gen. ix. 1.* where God repeats, and pronounces the very same original blessing upon the increase or birth of mankind 1600 years, and upwards, after Adam's transgression, when the world was to be restored, and replenished from Noah and his sons. This proves, that mankind, in all successive generations, have come, and will come into the world, under the very same blessing and favour of God, which was declared at the first creation of Man. It is of great importance to observe these remarks, not to produce any disgust or animosity towards those that espouse the contrary opinion, who ought to be treated with candour and forbearance, but to settle our own judgments upon right principles.

Once more; the original grant of sustenance to Man was confined to herbs, and the fruits of plants and trees, *ver. 29, 30.* which afterwards was enlarged, and included animal food, *Gen. ix. 3.*

Now let us take a survey of the nature which God has graciously bestowed upon us. The body consists of a mean material, *the dust of the ground*; but the mind is of nobler extraction, for (chap. ii. 7.) *God breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and Man became a living soul.* Job xxxii. 8. *The inspiration of the Almighty giveth us understanding*; the noblest gift of our Maker. The force and excellence of which appears in a surprising variety of inventions and discoveries. It is this faculty which penetrates into the most secret recesses of Nature; judges of, and admires the beauty and contrivance of the vast fabric of the universe; and traceth the footsteps of the most astonishing wisdom and regularity in the various situations and motions of the heavenly bodies. By this we review generations and actions, characters and events, that existed long before we were born; and dart our reflections the other way, into futurity, even as far as to the final period of this world, with all its works. By this we conceive, though but negatively, Eternity itself; and apprehend the state and felicity of beings far superior to ourselves. By this we stretch our thoughts to the highest excellency, and contemplate the nature of the infinitely perfect Being.

Our singular honour and advantage lies in our moral capacities. While instinct determines the pursuits of inferior creatures; whilst they are utterly unable to judge of causes and effects, to draw consequences, or to reason about the natures and tendencies of things, in order to avoid or embrace, and are rather acted upon than act; we deliberate, we choose our way, we feel and examine what is before us; this is good, and therefore to be chosen; this is evil, therefore to be avoided; this will improve and exalt our life, this leads to dishonour and misery. We can study and observe the precepts of Divine Wisdom; imitate the moral perfections of Deity; converse with the supreme Father, and desire, and dispose ourselves for, the everlasting enjoyment of his favour. And agreeably to these distinguishing honours of our nature, God our Maker, whose delights are with the children of men, has expressed his high regards to us, by supplying us with all proper materials for the improvement of our understandings; not only the objects of nature; but also the writings of good and wise men, especially the holy Scriptures, a rich treasury of the most excellent knowledge; containing the most surprising discoveries, the most useful instructions, the most just and noble principles and motives, and whatever is proper to cultivate and refine our spirits. In particular, the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, That God should send his well-beloved Son out of his bosom to dwell among us in our flesh, to reveal the high designs of the Divine Wisdom and Goodness, to give himself a sacrifice and offering to God upon the cross, to make atonement for our sins, to raise us to the dignity of kings and priests to his God and Father, that we might reign for ever with him; this exalts the love of God to men infinitely beyond our highest thoughts and imaginations; this raises our nature to an amazing, to an inexpressible dignity and value.

These considerations should dispose us to be pleased with our being, and thankful to our Maker for it. With pleasure we should reflect that we are *men*. Every person, how low soever in the world, hath that in possession, which is more valuable than thousands of gold and silver; an
immense

immense treasure, to which the whole earth bears no proportion; *himself*, a reasonable Soul, an immortal Spirit; to which, in real excellence, the visible creation, the earth with all its material riches, the sky with all its splendid furniture, is not to be compared. Let us not measure ourselves by worldly riches. The soul is the standard of the Man, and raises him vastly above all that is earthly. How foolish then, how shameful, how impious is it to prostitute ourselves to the trifles of the world; to be fond of earthly things, and to make our reason a drudge to sensual pursuits! God has made us *Men*, creatures of the finest powers and faculties; he hath used us as Men, by making the most ample provision to enable us to honour his Grace and our own being. And shall we desert our Manhood? Shall we despise the rich bounty of Heaven? Shall we mingle with the dust that particle of superior life, which God hath breathed into us? Rather let us assert the dignity of our being, and make it our principal care to improve it by all the advantages God hath provided. The knowledge of God; conformity of heart and life to his will; the fruits of the spirit, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance; converse with God; the high privileges of the sons of God; the prospects of eternal glory; these are the objects of our care: as we are enlightened by the Gospel, we are obliged to make these our study, and to form our spirits according to the sublime and excellent sentiments which these inspire, that thus we may be fitting ourselves for a much higher and more perfect degree of existence in a better world.

CH A P. VI.

Of the INSTITUTION of the SABBATH.

Gen. ii. Ver. 1, 2, 3.

AS soon as God had created the world, and man in it, he *blessed the Seventh Day*, upon which he rested from creation, and *sanctified it*, i. e. he distinguished it from the other six days by setting it apart to the purposes of religion. Thus the sanctification of the Sabbath is the first and oldest of God's institutions, and must have a real foundation in the nature of Man, and an immediate connexion with our being, and the great and excellent ends of it. The Sabbath and Man were, in a manner, created together. This is an indication, that although the particular time is, as it must necessarily be, of positive appointment, yet the thing itself is an article of natural religion, and stands upon the reason of things. The great end for which we are brought into life, is to attain the knowledge, and to be confirmed in the love and obedience of God; which includes all right action and virtue, all that is perfective of our nature, all that renders us happy in ourselves, and a blessing

blessing to others; and all that can qualify us for the enjoyment of God, and fit us for immortal honour and glory. We cannot keep a due and prevailing sense of these things upon our minds, without close and repeated application of thought; and therefore, as the affairs and necessities of this present life make such constant and importunate demands upon us, that our hearts and thoughts would be unavoidably ingrossed by them, it is in the nature of things necessary, that some certain time should be publickly appropriated to the exercises of religion, instruction, prayer and praise, to fortify our minds against temptations, and to season them with piety and virtue. And doubtless, God alone hath wisdom and authority sufficient to assign that portion of time which is proper and generally competent for those good purposes.

The Sabbath is perfectly suited to our nature and circumstances, and therefore was very properly instituted at the creation. But some of the learned pretend, that *Moses* here speaks, by anticipation, of the Institution of the Sabbath a long time after this, when he was law-giver in *Israel*. This is a fiction without any foundation in the text. The historian expressly relates, that God blessed and sanctified that day on which he rested, or ceased, from creation; which, in all fair construction, must be understood of his sanctifying it, at the time when he rested from creation. That we find no other mention of the Sabbath in the summary and very comprehensive history of *Genesis*, is no proof that the Patriarchs did not observe it; much less that the law thereof was not all that time in force. We find not the least mention, or intimation, of the Sabbath in all the book of *Joshua*, nor in *Judges*, *Ruth*, *I Samuel*, *II Samuel*, *I Kings*, till we come to *II Kings*, iv. 23. a far more particular history than the book of *Genesis*; and yet it is very certain that the law of the Sabbath was all that time in force, and without doubt was observed too. There are very clear intimations of regard to the Sabbath in the book of *Genesis*, chap. viii. 8—13. 'Thrice *Noah* sent the dove out of the ark, after he had every time waited seven days. *Jacob* (*Gen.* xxix. 27, 28.) fulfilled *Leah's* week. This plainly shews the Patriarchs, long before *Moses* was born, reckoned time by *seven days*, or *weeks*; which can be referred to no other supposable original but the institution of the Sabbath, at the creation.

The *Israelites* indeed, during their long continuance and servitude in *Egypt*, upwards of 200 years, seem to have lost their reckoning of the Sabbath, when they were constrained by perpetual and most servile labour to neglect the observance of it. However, it certainly was the appointment of God, that they should begin a new reckoning of the seventh day, and form a new epocha, namely, the falling of the manna. *Exod.* xvi. 5. *And it shall come to pass on the sixth day, they shall prepare that manna which they bring in; and it shall be twice as much as they gather daily.* And when the people had done so, the rulers of the congregation came, and told *Moses*; probably inquiring into the reason, why God had given such an order, *ver.* 23. *And Moses said unto them, This is that which the Lord hath said, or, this is the meaning of the Divine Command; To-morrow is the rest of the holy Sabbath unto the Lord.* *Ver.* 25, 26. *Ye shall not then find it in the field; six days shall ye gather it, but on the seventh day, which is the Sabbath, there shall be none.* And this course continued for

for forty years, till they came into the land of *Canaan*. Now this was devised in much wisdom to settle and determine the day, which, otherwise, having lost their reckoning, during their long servitude in *Egypt*, they possibly would not easily have been brought to agree upon. For thus, for forty years together, they would be under a necessity of distinguishing the Sabbath, and of resting upon it; having little else to do, the greatest part of the time, but to gather and dress *manna*; and no *manna* falling upon that day, they must of course be assured of the day, and obliged to rest upon it. Note — the restoring and ascertaining the Sabbath, was the first point of religion that was settled, after the children of *Israel* came out of *Egypt*, as being of the greatest moment; and this, in relation to the original institution; for the law at mount *Sinai* was not then given.

Afterwards the ordinance of the Sabbath was inserted into the body of the moral law, under a particular emphasis, *Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it holy*. And the Jew is reminded of the antiquity of this institution, in the reason annexed to this commandment, *For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, &c.* And being thus ranked among the other great articles of our duty, which are of moral obligation, and are always referred and appealed to, by our Lord and his Apostles, as binding to us Christians, it must stand upon the same ground, and lay the same obligations upon our consciences. For the same truth and authority, which enacted the rest, enacted this precept also. He that said, *Thou shalt have no other gods before me—thou shalt not bow down to any graven image—thou shalt not take the name of God in vain—honour thy father—thou shalt do no murder—&c.* said also, *Remember the Sabbath-Day to keep it holy*.

The Jewish festivals, new-moons and sabbaths, as they were shadows and figures of good things to come under the Gospel, our Lord did abolish. When the substance was come, the shadow vanished. And it is of sabbaths in this sense the Apostle speaks, *Col. ii. 16. Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a holy-day, or of the new-moon, or of the sabbath-days*. But the seventh-day Sabbath was no part of the Levitical law; it existed long before that, and therefore was not abolished with it. On the contrary, our Lord claims dominion over the Sabbath. *Luke vi. 5. He said unto the Pharisees, that the Son of Man is Lord also of the Sabbath*. Therefore the Sabbath must be an ordinance belonging to our Lord's kingdom, otherwise he could not be Lord of it. He never pretended to be Lord of circumcision, or of sacrifices; these belonged to a dispensation of which he was not Lord. But he is Lord of the Christian Dispensation, and its ordinances, and among the rest, of the Sabbath. In consequence of which Lordship,

I. He rectified the superstitious abuse of the Sabbath, and reduced it to the original standard. He reformed the traditionary corruptions of several of the commandments of moral and eternal obligation (c). But of all others, most signally, remarkably, and constantly, by words and by deeds, at the hazard of his life, he reformed the abuse of the fourth commandment;

(c) Mat. v. 21, 27, 33. xv. 4, &c.

commandment (*d*); which he never would have done, had the Sabbath been an ordinance that was to die in a little time with the Jewish dispensation. On the contrary, this demonstrates, that he regarded the just sanctification of the Sabbath as of perpetual obligation; and as of very great importance in religion.

II. He removed the Sabbath from the seventh to the first day of the week. For we find in the Apostolic History that the Disciples met together on that day, (called the Lord's Day, *Rev. i. 10.*) to break bread, or to celebrate the Lord's Supper, which is the proper and peculiar worship of Christians, *Acts xx. 7.* Now this could not be done without the express injunction of the Apostles; nor could the Apostles do this without a commission from Christ. And as our Lord rose from the dead on the first day, we suppose the Christian Sabbath hath relation to his Resurrection; and so the Lord's Day hath been kept holy by the universal Church from the Apostles days to this time.

Thus there have been three *epochs*, or dates, from which the Sabbath has been counted, namely, (1.) From the first day of the creation. (2.) From the first day of the falling of the *manna*. (3.) From the first day of the Gospel Dispensation. But still it is the seventh day makes the Sabbath, which God blessed; and the seventh, which we now observe, is as much, and as truly the Sabbath, which God sanctified, as ever it was from the beginning of the world.

The primary notion of the Sabbath, is a rest or cessation from the ordinary business of life. The design of it is to preserve true religion; which would never have been lost in the world, had the Sabbath been duly observed from the first institution of it. And therefore we find in Scripture, both under the old and new dispensations, it was applied to the purposes of religion. It is represented as a holy convocation, on which the *Israelites* were to assemble for divine worship, *Lev. xxiii. 3.* *David* wrote the 92d Psalm for the Sabbath-Day, and therein gives us just ideas of the work of it. On this day the *Jews* met together in their synagogues for religious exercises; and there our Lord honoured and sanctified the Sabbath by his presence and instructions. *Mark i. 21, 2. vi. 2. Luke iv. 16, 31. xiii. 10.* And all Christians, in all times and places, have assembled on the Sabbath to hear the word of God, to offer up prayer and thanksgiving, and to celebrate the Lord's Supper, in order to employ their thoughts in pious meditations, and furnish their minds with the best principles and dispositions. A work exceeding pleasant and profitable, which demands and deserves the whole of our thought and attention. Therefore, for this good purpose, we are to rest from ordinary business, and to avoid whatever may dissipate our thoughts, or indispose our hearts for the heavenly work of the day.

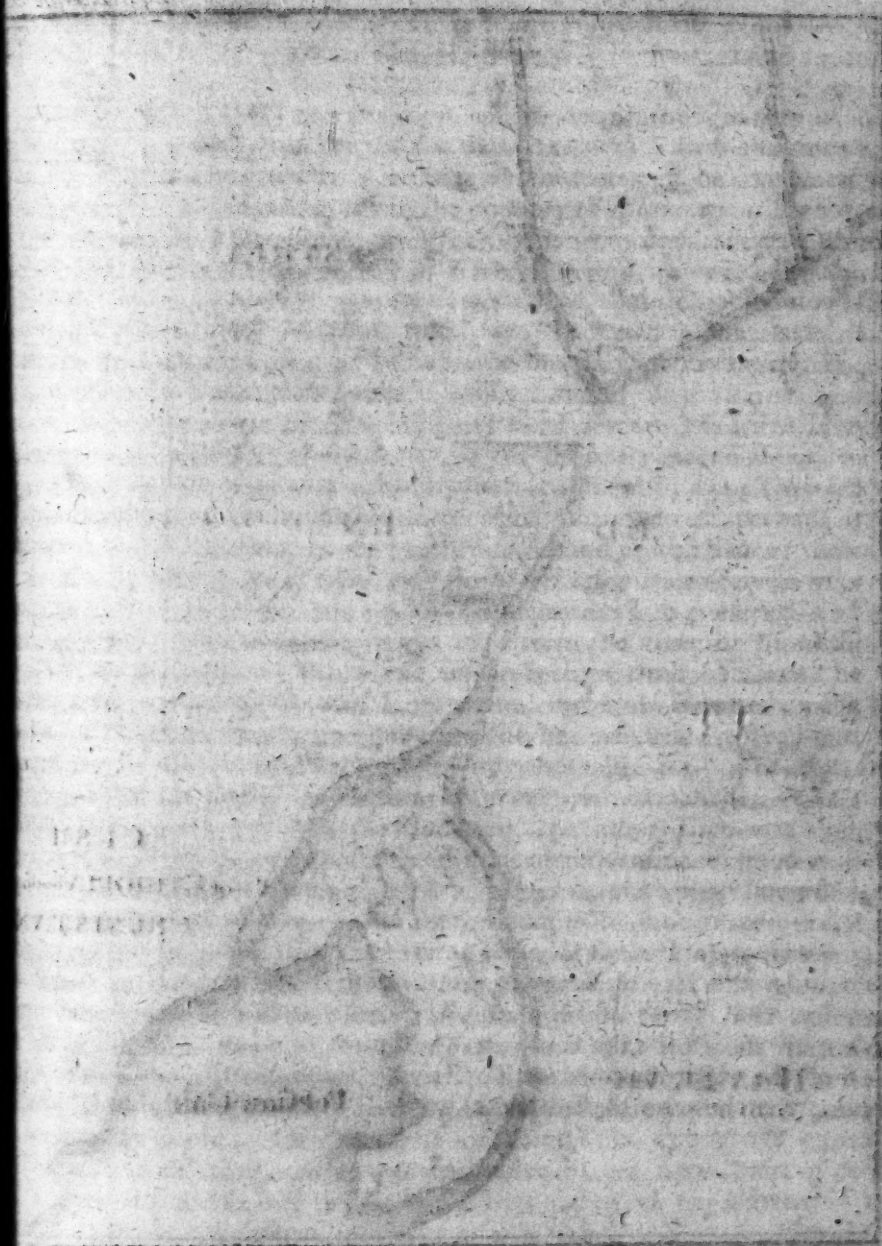
Our Lord hath taught us so to understand this, as not to mix any thing superstitious with the observation of the Sabbath, nor to conceive of it as such a scrupulous rest, that we may not do any thing fit and reasonable, and which otherwise is a duty; works of necessity and mercy he expressly allows. Whatever cannot be deferred to another day, without loss

(*d*) See *Mat. xii. 1—12. Luke vi. 10, 11. xiii. 11—17. xiv. 1—7. John v. 9—19. vii. 19—23. ix. 14, 15, 16.*

loss or damage, may be taken care of on the Sabbath. And in general he hath pronounced, *That the Sabbath* (alluding probably to the first institution of it) *was made for man*, to be subservient to his virtue and happiness; *not man for the Sabbath*. Man was made for duties of moral and eternal obligation, and is bound to observe them in whatever extremity or necessity he may be; but man is not made for the rigorous observation of the sabbatical rest, or any other positive institution, so as thereby to embarrass or distress his life, or to neglect any opportunity of doing good.

I conclude with a few reflections upon *Isai. lviii. 13, 14*. Having, in the name of God, recommended goodness, charity, and compassion, in the preceding verses, and pronounced a singular blessing upon those who exercise them, the Prophet adds, by the same authority, *If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day.* q. d. “If you conscientiously suspend the ordinary business of life, and forbear to please and gratify your own inclinations, that with a free and composed mind you may attend upon the services of religion, for which I have sanctified the Sabbath; and [if thou] *call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him*; if you have such a sense of the excellency and benefit of the Sabbath, that you take delight therein, accounting it a pleasure and happiness, as being consecrated to the worship of the most high God, and therefore honourable and glorious in itself; and honourable also to you, as it is a mark of the dignity of your nature, a token of your interest in the divine favour, (*Exod xxxi. 13. Ezek. xx. 12.*) and of your being admitted to communion with him; if in this persuasion you shall sincerely endeavour to honour God by employing the day in the offices of devotion, *not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words*; not doing the ordinary works of your calling, nor spending the time in amusements or diversions, or in impertinent conversation; *then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord*; then thou shalt become such a proficient in piety, and gain such a sense of God and religion, as will establish in your heart a fund of holy pleasure, comfort, joy, and good hope towards God.” The Prophet, in this chapter, is inculcating real, vital, acceptable religion, goodness and compassion to our fellow-creatures, and piety towards God in keeping the Sabbath, promising the like blessings to both those branches of true religion, namely, the favour of God and the constant care of his Providence. We may therefore take this from the Spirit of God, as a just description of the right manner of sanctifying the Sabbath, and assure ourselves, that he who blessed the Day, will bless us in keeping it holy.

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C H A P. VII.

Of a STATE of TRIAL.

Gen. ii. 8—18.

CONCERNING the situation and rivers of the country of *Eden*, as here described by *Moses*, Bp. *PATRICK*, in his Commentary upon this place, gives an account which seems to be not altogether improbable. The Garden lay in the country of *Eden*; out of, or through, which country a river went unto the Garden to water it (ver. 11.); and from thence, from the country of *Eden*, it parted, or was divided, and became into four heads; namely, two above, before it entered *Eden*, called *Euphrates* and *Hiddekel*, or *Tigris*; and two below, after it had passed through *Eden*, called *Pison* and *Gihon*, which compasseth, or runneth along by, the whole land of *Cush*. ver. 13.

In the eastern part of *Eden* the Lord God planted a Garden furnished with all pleasant and useful fruits. And there he placed *Adam* to dress and keep it; for man was made for business, ver. 8, 15. Two trees in this Garden were remarkably distinguished from the rest, perhaps in appearance and situation, as well as in use, namely, the *Tree of Life*, and the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*. These, I conceive, were appointed for instruction and religious meditation; to preserve in *Adam's* mind a sense of the consequences of virtue and vice, or of obedience and disobedience. In this view, while he continued obedient, he was allowed to eat of the *Tree of Life*, as a pledge and assurance on the part of God, that he should live for ever, or be immortal; after his transgression he was denied access to it, chap. iii. 24. For the same purpose, as a pledge of immortality restored in Christ, it is used, *Rev. ii. 7.*, *xxii. 2.* On the contrary, the other Tree was designed to give him the knowledge, the sense or apprehension of good and evil, or of good connected with evil, i. e. of pernicious enjoyment, destructive gratification, vicious pleasure, or such as cannot be enjoyed without transgressing the law of God. *Good and Evil*, I apprehend, is an *bendiadys*, like that *Gen. xix. 24.* *brimstone and fire*, i. e. fired or burning brimstone. *1 Chron. xxii. 5.* *the house must be—of fame and glory*, i. e. of glorious fame. *Pateris libamus et aura*, i. e. aureis pateris. *oro* may signify pleasure or profit. [See the explication of it in the *Heb. Engl. Concordance*.] Thus *Good and Evil* may denote pernicious pleasure or profit. Of the fruit of this Tree, though it appeared pleasant and inviting, *Adam* was forbidden to eat upon pain of death. This was to make him understand, that unlawful enjoyment of any kind would be his destruction.

These two Trees may be considered as *Adam's* books. He was in a kind of infantile state, void of all learning, without any theorems or general principles to govern himself by. God was therefore pleased, in this sensible manner, to impress upon his mind just conceptions of the very different consequences of obedience and disobedience. And it will

be of great use even to us, at this day, to look into, and to meditate upon these two books of our first father.

What requires our particular attention is this, that *Adam's* obedience is put upon Trial by the prohibition, *ver. 17. But of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* Adam had not gained the habits of obedience and holiness, but was put under this instance of discipline in order to his acquiring of them. As soon as God had made Man a moral agent, he put him upon Trial. And it is universally allowed, that all mankind are in the same state, in a State of Trial. It must therefore be of importance to have right notions of such a State.

In order to this, let it be well considered,

I. *That God hath erected a kingdom for his honour, and the felicity of his rational creatures.* This kingdom, our Lord informs us, was prepared from the foundation of the world. *Mat. xxv. 34.* There we men shall be equal to the angels, *Luke xx. 36;* and probably, like them, shall be placed in posts of honour and power, in some part of the universe; as is plainly intimated, *Mat. xxiv. 45—47. xxv. 21. Luke xix. 17. 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3. Rev. ii. 10. iii. 21.*

II. *Without holiness, or an habitual subjection of the Will to Reason, or to the Will of God, none can be fit to be members of this kingdom.* Wickedness, in its very nature, stands directly opposed to the peace and well-being of the universe; for it is error in the mind, rebellion against God, and mischief to all within its influence. And the most benevolent of all Beings will not take error, rebellion, and mischief into his kingdom, erected for the purposes of goodness and enjoyment. *Rev. xxi. 27.* *And there shall in no wise enter into it, the holy City, new Jerusalem; (ver. 2.) any thing that defileth, any impure, vicious persons; neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie; all idolaters, all that practise iniquity and deceit, are excluded out of it. But they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it; the excellent of the earth, who have purged themselves from all ungodliness and sin, and so are vessels unto honour, sanctified and fit for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work.* Nothing but subjection to the Will of God, in all duty and obedience, can qualify us for the honours, felicity, and employments of the kingdom of heaven. Therefore,

III. *No moral agents, merely on account of their natural powers, how excellent soever, are worthy to be admitted into the kingdom of God.* Natural powers, in angels as well as worms, are the workmanship and gift of God alone; and therefore, not being the virtue, nor the effect of the virtue of the beings that are possessed of them, can be no recommendation to the continued favour and esteem of God. In order to that, the natural powers of moral Agents must not only be capable of right action, but also actually exerted in acting rightly. Otherwise, their powers, though of the noblest kind, are useless and insignificant. It is one thing to be born, or produced into the kingdom of nature, and another to be born to the habits of virtue, whereby we are rendered fit to be admitted into the kingdom of heaven. The former depends entirely upon God's sovereign pleasure; in giving life and powers, in any kind or degree, he chooseth; the other depends upon a right use and application of the

powers God hath bestowed; and is the privilege only of those wise and happy spirits, who attain to a habit of true holiness. And thus, our Lord's rule, *Job. iii. 3. Except a man be born again, he cannot see, or enjoy, the kingdom of God,* may extend to all created minds, whatsoever, under their several peculiar circumstances.

IV. *Holiness, or virtue, cannot be forced upon us whether we will or not.* The violence which overpowers and compels the Will, destroys the Will or Choice, and consequently destroys Virtue; which is no other-wise Virtue, than as it is freely chosen. That being which cannot be vicious, cannot be virtuous. If he is not free to choose evil, he is not free to choose good; for a power of being virtuous, necessarily implies a power of being the contrary. The only means, therefore, that can be used to induce a moral Agent to Virtue, are instruction, admonition, persuasion, the impression of objects or circumstances upon the mind, the suggestions of the Spirit of God, and such like methods as engage attention, and influence inclination and choice, without destroying Freedom. And a *habit* of Virtue, which alone recommends us to God, can be gained and ascertained no otherwise than by repeated Acts, by use and exercise, by being put to the proof under proper Trials, by resisting solicitations, surmounting difficulties, and bearing sufferings. This is the most natural way of bringing Virtue, or Holiness, to its maturity and stability. Therefore,

V. *It seems agreeable to the reason of things, that all rational creatures whatsoever should, for some time, be in a State of Trial.* However, this is, or hath been, the case of all we are acquainted with. The Angels have passed through a probation, doubtless adapted to their different circumstances; in which some of them abode not in the truth; they sinned; they kept not their first estate; *Job. viii. 44. 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude 6.* And our first parents, how singular soever their condition might be in other respects, were put under a particular Trial, by being forbidden to eat of the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*; which must be intended to form their minds to an habitual obedience to the Law, or Will, of God.

VI. *We Men are upon Trial.* This is evident from Revelation, where we are represented as *Pilgrims and Strangers*, looking for, and travelling to a better country, *1 Pet. ii. 11.*—As in a *warfare*, where we must fight for the victory, as we hope to be crowned, *Ephes. vi. 14.*—As in a *race*, where we are running for a prize, *Heb. xii. 1. 1. Cor. ix. 24, 25.*—As *labourers* in a vineyard, who have work to do in order to receive wages, *Mat. xx. 1.*—As *servants* intrusted with their master's substance, for the improvement of which they are accountable to him, *Mat. xxv. 14. Luke xix. 13.* And God hath appointed a day, in which he will call us to an account for our present behaviour, and render to every man according to what he hath done in the body, whether it be good or evil. This is the strongest evidence, that we are now upon Trial. And the sense of Revelation is abundantly confirmed by our circumstances in life.

Our faculties are of the noblest kind, and we enjoy all manner of means for the cultivation of them; but not without great care, industry, and resolution. So many are the occasions of deception, and so easily are we misled in our searches after the truth, that we cannot attain

to any clear or useful knowledge without a constant and cautious attention. Even Revelation, like the heavens themselves, is interspersed with clouds, things dark and hard to be understood. And when we have found the truth, the profession of it is attended with much inconvenience and trouble from the pride and malice of persecution. All which is wisely appointed; for, had all been plain, obvious, and easy, our integrity and sincere attachment to truth could not have been exercised and proved. The passions and appetites of the flesh; the possessions, gains, pleasures, and customs of the world; the calamities of life, diseases, disappointments, losses, dangers, enemies, fears, wants, weakness; all these are great embarrassments to virtue and piety, fatigue and solicit our minds from righteousness and purity, and oblige us to constant watchfulness and self-denial, in order to gain and secure the habits of holiness. Every condition, every possession is accompanied with its temptations. Wherever we are, we are in the midst of snares; and whatever we have carries some danger or other in it; insomuch that, without care and attention, we cannot preserve the purity of our minds, which yet, by the nature of things, and the command of God, we are obliged to do. This shews we are upon Trial, or in a state of discipline. For,

VII. *A State of Trial necessarily requires, that different and opposite interests* (as the flesh and the spirit, the law of God, and the law in our members, the present world, and a future state) *should so stand in competition for our affections and regards, as to oblige us to be very serious in considering, and thoroughly sincere in choosing and pursuing what is right and good.* And herein lies our Trial; whether we will follow God, or forsake him; prefer our mortal bodies before our immortal souls; the gratification of our lusts, before the purity and peace of our minds; the things of this transitory world, before the heavenly and eternal inheritance.

VIII. *The end and design of our Trial is to refine and exalt our nature.* James i. 12. *Blessed is the man that worthily endureth temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.* Heb. xii. 11. *No chastening for the present is joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, &c.* If indeed we are overcome by temptation, and drawn into a contempt of God, truth, and righteousness, we debase and destroy ourselves; we prove ourselves to be unfit for the happy society in heaven, forfeit the favour of God, and shall fall into perdition. But this must be our own fault. The noble intention of our Maker is that we should overcome temptation, and then we are happy for ever. We have stood the test, we have passed honourably through our Trials; we have approved ourselves to God, as those whom he judges fit for preferment and happiness in his eternal kingdom. And shortly we shall hear, *Well done, good and faithful, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.* Hence our Trial is compared to that of silver and gold, Job xxiii. 10. Psal. lxxvi. 10, 11. 1 Pet. i. 6, 7.

To explain Scripture language, we must distinguish between temptation of Trial, and Seduction. Temptation of Trial, or probation, God hath wisely ordained for the exercise and proof of our virtue. So he tempted Abraham, Gen. xxii. 1. Temptation of seduction is when we are drawn into sin, James i. 13. *Let no man say, when he is tempted, he is seduced into sin by temptation.*

From the preceding propositions we may draw the following conclusions.

COROL. 1. *Trials, of the severest kind, are no mark of God's displeasure, nor any proof that we are under his wrath and curse. Adam in his state of innocence was tried. The best of God's servants have gone through heavy Trials. Our Lord was tempted in all points as we are, but without sin, Heb. iv. 15. My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction. For whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. Prov. iii. 11, 12.*

COROL. 2. *The appetites and passions implanted in our constitution, are not the corruption of our nature, but means of our Trial. And therefore we shall be freed from them, when that is over, 1 Cor. vi. 13. Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats — but God shall destroy both it and them — xv. 44. It is sown an animal body, it is raised a spiritual body.*

COROL. 3. *Whatever Trials may be the occasion of sin, may much more be the occasion of virtue and holiness. Temptation may occasion sin, but is not the cause or reason of it; for, seeing no temptation can ever make it reasonable to sin, every temptation, if the sinner chooseth, may be rejected as unreasonable. On the other hand, temptation is naturally an opportunity of exerting our virtue, and of gaining an honourable and glorious victory. Distresses and wants may fill our hearts with solicitude, and tempt us to murmur against God; but they have a tendency, being duly considered, to lead us to faith in him, and a humble patient submission to his will, the most perfect part of a worthy character. Wealth, honour, and power, may prove incentives to pride, luxury, and oppression; but they may, and ought to be motives to gratitude, and means of greater usefulness. Our appetites and passions may seduce to intemperance and debauchery; but they may be the occasion of practising the most laudable self-government and sobriety. And so of all the rest. Rom. v. 3. We glory in tribulations; knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, that hope which maketh not ashamed, or that shall never be disappointed. James i. 2. My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into temptations; knowing that the Trial of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing to qualify you for the kingdom of heaven.*

COROL. 4. *In a State of Trial natural evil hath a tendency to promote moral good. For under any defects of happiness, virtue may be exercised and increase. Hence it follows, (1.) That this life, notwithstanding the afflictions which attend it, is a day of salvation, or a proper and valuable opportunity of attaining eternal life. (2) That the quantity of virtue in this present world is not to be measured by the joy it giveth the possessor, or the good it doth to others, but by the circumstances of Trial under which it acteth and subsisteth. For although all holiness, by the will of God, will sooner or later be crowned with joy; and always actually brings forth good works, in proportion to the agent's power and opportunities; yet two agents, of equal virtue, may be so differently situated in the creation, that the virtue of the one shall produce a thousand times less comfort to its self, and benefit to others, than the virtue of the other. Or, the same virtue which, in this life, brings forth but*

one degree of joy and usefulness, in another world may bring forth a thousand degrees,

This stands upon two principles. 1. That holiness and happiness are essentially different, and connected only by the will of God. Hence it is, in fact, that many persons, truly virtuous and pious, have yet no comfort of their virtue. 2. The proper act of a moral agent stands in the will and choice alone, not in the external effect produced by it; and therefore the will, or choice, may be completely holy, where yet the outward act is hindered by contrary circumstances. Upon these grounds one may venture to affirm, that the virtue of *Lazarus*, which, under all his pains and poverty in our earth, brought forth but a small degree of joy and usefulness, might, in *Abraham's* bosom, be equal to the virtue of an Angel in heaven, which actually brought forth ten thousand degrees. For as a cubical foot of our grosser air might possibly expand, and fill a cubical furlong in the higher and thinner region of pure *Ether*; so that virtue, which can subsist under the loads and clogs of our temptations and difficulties, though its present fruits are but small, may dilate and blaze out into a glory, magnificence, and splendour, equal to that of the holiest Angels. This the Apostle *Peter* intimates, 1 *Pet.* i. 7. *The tried faith of persecuted Saints will be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, at the appearing of Jesus Christ.*

COROL. 5. *This world is not a State of Enjoyment.* He that made it, and Man in it, made it for Trial. We must not therefore dream of a continued course of ease, peace, and prosperity, but must expect to meet with Trials.

COROL. 6. *It is no matter in what temporal circumstances we are, if we do but acquit ourselves well and faithfully in the sight of God.* *Job*, under all his calamities, was not a worse man, or less the care and delight of Heaven. He was then like gold in the furnace, under the discipline of Divine Wisdom and Love, in order to his being purified into a condition more illustrious and excellent. You are in plenty and prosperity. What then? This is but an instance of your Trial, and your real happiness must be measured by the effects they have upon your mind. If prosperity disposes to thankfulness and good works, it is happy; but if it seduceth you to forget God, and to indulge irregular appetites, it is hurtful and pernicious. On the other hand, you are in affliction, want, trouble, pain. What then? This is not your fixed condition; it is only one instance of a temporary Trial, which shortly will be at an end. And if your afflictions work in you greater contempt of the world, self-denial, faith, submission, heavenly-mindedness, &c. your condition is happy, and your afflictions are really better for you than any other State you may fondly wish for. But observe, this is to be understood of afflictions brought upon us by Providence, and will not justify us in bringing them upon ourselves by any faulty criminal conduct. It is nevertheless our duty, by all lawful means, to procure the conveniences and comforts of life,

C H A P. VIII.

Further Reflections on a STATE of TRIAL.

IT is of the last importance to have right notions of life, as a State of Trial. For thus the whole scene, otherwise confused and unaccountable, will appear in a just and rational light. Thus we shall be convinced, that our being is given us upon the most reasonable and advantageous terms, for the highest and most excellent ends; and shall clearly understand what we have to do for the improvement and exaltation of it, free from the vain imaginations and pursuits, hopes and fears, joys and anxieties, which distract the minds of the unthinking and ignorant. What I have further to advance upon this point, is comprised in the following propositions.

I. *It is a matter of great difficulty to adjust our Trials and succours, so as not to overpower our faculties by either, but leave us in the free use of them.*

II. *God alone hath wisdom sufficient to appoint and adjust our Trials.* Because he alone understands perfectly how to adapt them to the nature of our minds, and to the designs of his goodness. Whereas we know but little of the nature of our spirits, and therefore are not able to proportion temptations to our powers, nor helps and assistances to our temptations. We are not acquainted with the work we have to do in the future world, nor the several sorts of beings with whom we may hereafter be concerned, in the way of fellowship or enmity; and therefore are by no means capable of judging, what sort or degree of Trials are proper to give us suitable qualifications. For this reason, it is plainly our duty and wisdom, humbly and patiently to submit to the Trials God is pleased to allot, and to behave well and faithfully under them; without censuring, or quarrelling with his disposals, which is foolish and impious. But though our understandings in this case are very defective, yet I conceive there are some general principles of which we may be, in a good measure, certain. As,

III. *The bias of Evil in our Trials ought to be strong in proportion to the degree of virtue required of us.* For the degree of virtue is to be measured by the degree of temptation which it resists. That virtue is but in a low degree, which can overcome but a small temptation; that virtue is in a higher, which can overcome a stronger temptation; and that virtue is in the highest degree, which is superior to all temptation.

IV. *The degree of Virtue God expects from us, is to be proportioned to the eminent stations to which we are to be exalted in his kingdom.* Or, we shall be exalted in proportion to the Virtue we have attained. *Mat. xix. 28. Luke xix. 16, 17, 18, 19.*

V. *Our Trial seems to be appointed for a State of Confirmation*—and therefore the virtue we are to attain must be such as will secure our perseverance in it; which confirmation and perseverance must stand, not upon

upon our being forcibly constrained to be virtuous, which is a contradiction, but upon the habits we have attained, or the settled good dispositions of our minds. And it seems to be the great end of our Trial in this world, that we may attain to such a degree of sanctity, experienced in a variety of Trials, as in God's wisdom appears to be of that genuine sort, which shall eventually persevere, and abide to all eternity. Of which matter our Lord speaketh in this wise, *Luke xvi. 10, 11, 12. He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much. If ye therefore have been unfaithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, i. e. that which may at any uncertain time be taken from you, and therefore, for the sake of which it is not worth your while to do a wrong or wicked thing, who shall give you that which is your own*?* what you are to possess for ever, or which you are never to be deprived of. This plainly shews, that we are qualified for honours and trusts in heaven, no otherwise than by our present faithfulness, or the real good qualities of our minds; and that we are now tried in a little, that we may be faithful in much.

VI. *The Judge of all the Earth hath certainly balanced our Trials with the greatest exactness and equity, that temptation may not be too violent for our weakness, and yet strong enough to put our virtue to its proper proof.* Fleshly lusts war against the soul, but are conquered effectually by temperance, or keeping our bodies in subjection. The world allures our minds; but the world of glory is open to full view, to draw our regards thither. If the devil and his angels are permitted to practise his malice in perverting mankind, God hath sent forth a holy and powerful Spirit to illuminate, sanctify, strengthen, and comfort; and hath ordered his Angels, in great numbers, to be ministering Spirits to the Heirs of Salvation. We may assure ourselves, that we are upon a fair, and even favourable, Trial; for, if we do not neglect our advantages, the means of securing our virtue, if we choose to be virtuous, do far surpass the occasion of vice and sin; and in all our conflicts more are with us, than are against us; God is with us.

VII. *Our Condition is well adapted to the purposes of moral Improvement.* If we consider life as a State of Enjoyment, all is in confusion and disorder, and we are easily misled into the most foul and fatal errors; but if we take life as a Trial, for the exercise of our virtue, in order to our future advancement, then every part of it will appear to be properly appointed. We have every day opportunities of shewing our sincere regards to God, by giving him the preference to the many appetites and objects which court our affections, and come in competition with him.

We

* ——— Nimium vobis Romana propago

Visa potens, superi, propria [*perpetua*] hæc si dona fuissent.

Æneid. vi. lin. 870.

Nihilne esse proprium [*perpetuum*] cuiquam?

Ter. Andr. Act. iv. Scen. 3. lin. 1.

Omne quod habemus, aut mutuum est, aut proprium.

Dgnat. in locum.

We have opportunities enough to learn what is sufficient for us to know. And the obscurities and difficulties in the way of *truth*, are not designed to debar us from it, but to exercise our integrity in our searches after it, and profession of it. All the calamities of life, pains of body, infirmities, seducements, losses, &c. are occasions of *purifying our hearts*, by sobriety, humility, repentance, self-denial, patience, &c. And for *social virtues*, we cannot suppose ourselves in any situation, where we should have more occasions, or more pressing motives to exercise every species of benevolence towards our fellow-creatures. And if our love to men must surmount both self-love, that deceitful principle in ourselves, and ingratitude, that ugly vice in others, hereby we are obliged to exercise, in the most generous, disinterested, and godlike manner, a virtue of the first rank, and the most necessary to preferment in God's creation. For he is the fittest for business and trust, under the universal Father, who most of all participates of his kind dispositions and goodwill towards the whole universe of beings.

VIII. *Different persons, as they have different capacities, advantages, and opportunities, and are in different circumstances, conditions, and situations, are under different Trials.* Mat. xxv. 15. Luke xii. 47, 48.

IX. *God allots to every particular person his Trial.* He gives our capacities and opportunities, assigns our circumstances and outward condition, and measures our afflictions and comforts. Therefore, whatever our Trials may be, this should calm our uneasy minds, that they are meted out to us by the same wise Hand which created and governs universal Nature.

X. *Every one will be judged, and receive reward or punishment according to the circumstances of his own particular Trial;* and all things relating to it, all advantages and disadvantages, will be weighed in the exactest balance, and determined accordingly. Luke xii. 47, 48. *That servants which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that was in different circumstances, and knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes.* Here observe, that God fully understands the degrees of the guilt, or virtue of particular persons; but we do not, and therefore should be cautious in judging.

XI. *There are degrees of Trial;* or temptation may be more or less intense. The sufferings of the flesh may be raised to such an height of anguish and terror, or its passions so inflamed, as to suspend the use of thought and reason.

XII. *God can raise or sink our Trial as he pleases.* When he sees fit, he can give a calm and quiet state; and when he pleaseth can raise storms about us, and heat the furnace of temptation seven times more than it was wont to be heated. *Job*, in his Trial by prosperity, acquitted himself well; and under great pains and poverty, he sinned not, nor charged God foolishly. But at length, through the unkind usage of his friends, and perhaps some other concurring circumstances, his Trial began to be so hard, that he opened his mouth, and cursed his day. Whenever the Almighty pleaseth, he can permit a Trial that will shake the strongest faith. Therefore,

XIII. *No good resolutions or dispositions, no degrees of spiritual strength to which*

which we have attained, is an absolute security, that we shall be for the future steadfast and unmoveable. New, or sudden Trials, stronger than any we have hitherto met with, may shake and stagger the stability of our minds. Let no man imagine, that his former victories will exempt him from a possibility of falling. It is the will of God, that every man, the best of men, in this State, should be under a constant necessity of watching. *Wherefore, let us take unto ourselves the whole armour of God, that we may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done, or overcome, all to stand.* Eph. vi. 13.

XIV. *All Trial is attended with danger.* And therefore some, if not many, in a State of Trial, may fall into perdition; as wicked angels and men.

XV. *Our danger is not from God, but from ourselves.* God tempts, or seduceth into sin, no man, Jam. i. 13, 14, 15. for this very good reason, because he cannot himself be tempted with evil, such is his abhorrence and detestation of it; and therefore cannot be inclined to draw any of his creatures into the practice of it. *But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away from righteousness, by his own lust, and enticed to commit sin.*

XVI. *All temptation is vincible to those that are willing to overcome.* See Prop. VI. All the admonitions, exhortations, encouragements in Scripture, suppose and support the truth of this proposition.

XVII. *We are victorious over temptation, not by our own power, but by the grace and power of God.* Even when the spirit is willing, the flesh is weak. Mark xiv. 38. We are indeed under the highest obligations to use faithfully the powers we have already received, and no otherwise may we hope to be superior to temptation: but it is not our own wisdom or strength that can preserve and uphold us; for we are directed in Revelation to trust in God, and to seek unto him for succour and deliverance; which would be impertinent, were we sufficient to ourselves. Why should we ask help, when we do not want it? God alone is able to keep us from falling, and to stablish us in every good work. Jude 24. 2 Thess. ii. 16, 17. And we are abundantly assured, that he will give strength in proportion to our Trials, and our faithful endeavours; and that our future honours will be great in proportion to the present greater Trials we have surmounted. If we have overcome much, we shall enjoy much. For, observe, the succours of Divine Grace do not diminish the quantity of our virtue, or reward. Whatever helps our infirmity may require, our virtue is measured by our own sincere desires and endeavours, to which the Divine Aid is proportioned. So that, in moral construction, it is all one as if we had overcome in our own strength.

XVIII. *The means of conquering Temptation, on our part, are Watching and Prayer.* Mark xiv. 38. *Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.* (1.) *Watch.* Be not secure; expect temptation, and be sensible of the danger of it, the greatest of all dangers, the loss of the soul. Be not confident of your own strength. Keep out of the way of temptation. Avoid every snare that may intangle your minds. Indulge to no dangerous liberties; make no uncautious approaches towards folly and sin. That may be affected by slow degrees, which a man would never

at first have consented to be guilty of. He that fears falling down a precipice, will be sure not to come near it; and he that would extinguish the fire, should withdraw the fuel. Keep thy heart with all diligence; reject every sinful thought and suggestion. Keep the body in subjection to reason and religion by self-denial and abstinence. Beware of an undue attachment to the world. Your life and treasure is in heaven; and there let your hearts be. Let the word of God dwell in you richly by daily meditation. *Psal. cxix. 11. Thy word have I hid in mine heart; that I might not sin against thee.* (2.) *Pray.* Not that we may be totally exempted from temptation; for we came into the world for this very end, that we might be tried and tempted. We cannot reasonably expect that God, in our favour, should alter the constitution of the world, or of the human nature; but we should pray, that God would order our Trials in such manner as will best promote the purity and prosperity of our lives. *Prov. xxx. 8, 9. Remove far from me vanity and lies; give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me, &c.* The wise man doth not prescribe any condition that did not belong to him; but, in general, is desirous of that situation in life which God saw would be most favourable to his piety and integrity. *Lead us not; suffer us not to enter, into temptation, i. e. suffer us not to fall under the power and prevalence of temptation.* The example of our Lord is of the greatest force to direct and animate us in our conflicts; he took upon him our nature, and went through all our Trials, on purpose to shew us how to behave under them; and to assure us that, imitating his example, we shall at length be partakers of his glory. And thus by his perfect obedience, his obedience unto death, a sacrifice highly pleasing to God, he recovered that life and immortality which Adam forfeited by his disobedience.

C H A P. IX.

Of Law, or the religious DISPENSATION ADAM and EVE were under in the GARDEN.

GEN. ii. 17. *But of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.* This is Law; clear ideas of which are necessary to the right understanding of St. Paul's writings.

Law is a rule of action, or duty, commanding or prohibiting, given by the Sovereign to moral Agents, with the penalty of death annexed. Transgress and die, is the language of Law. And therefore every transgressor, the moment he is such, is dead in law; and, for any thing in Law, he must continue so, as long as it is true that he has violated the Law, that is, for evermore. For the Law, which condemns him, can give him no relief;

relief; as, in its own nature, it excludes repentance and pardon; neither of which can take place, unless Law is overruled, or the execution of it suspended by the authority and favour of the Sovereign. For Law would not be Law, if its sense or language were this, *the transgressor, who doth not repent and obtain pardon, shall die*; seeing this would be to allow transgression by Law, upon the uncertain conditions of repentance, and the Sovereign's mercy. "You may sin with impunity, if you do but repent, and find favour." And so the Law would be invalidated by itself, as it would allow a conditional transgression, which would annul the annexed penalty, by suspending the execution of it for ever, in expectation of the sinner's repentance, and the Sovereign's forgiveness; for, as the sinner may possibly repent in any future time to all eternity, so the Law could not at any time be executed. Consequently the Law, by this means, would be rendered for ever insignificant, as it might be violated for ever with impunity. Therefore, to be consistent with itself, Law must be conceived in absolute terms, *sin and die*, subjecting every sinner immediately to the penalty of death, which is the *curse of the Law*. Gal. iii. 10, 13. By this rule the Apostle, having proved that all flesh have sinned, concludes, that *no flesh*, or no part of mankind, *can be justified*, or entitled to life, before the Sovereign, by deeds or works of Law. Rom. iii. 20. For *the Law works wrath*, or subjects the transgressor to death, the curse or penalty of it, Rom. iv. 15. On which account it is very properly called, *the ministration, dispensation, or constitution, of death*, 2 Cor. iii. 7. as it is a constitution which affords nothing but rigid condemnation for all transgressors,

Hence it follows, that death in Law is death eternal, without hope of a revival or resurrection. For, as before proved, it is the very nature of Law, never to remit the penalty or forfeiture. The Law which now condemns the criminal, condemns him to death absolutely, and for evermore; the everlasting language of Law to every one that breaks it, and for every breach and transgression, being this, *Thou shalt die*. And this is the force of the expression מות תמות *moriendo morieris*, "in dying thou shalt die," in the Law given to Adam. It doth not speak of the certainty of the event, as if he should certainly die the day he transgressed, for the event shews the contrary; nor that he should become mortal from a change in his constitution, which is a random conjecture, without any foundation in the nature of his constitution, which was created mortal, or in the force of the words. For the phrase מות תמות is an Hebraism, importing that a thing is, or is done, thoroughly, totally, in the most perfect manner, or the most intense degree, and is to be interpreted according to the nature of the subject. As Gen. ii. 16. *אכל תאכל comedendo comedes*, "thou mayest freely eat," without any restraint. Chap. xxxvii. 33. *שרף שרף יסף discerpendo disceptus Joseph*, "Joseph is torn all to pieces," or most cruelly torn to pieces. Exod. xxi. 19. *ורפץ ירפץ et medicando medicabitur*, "and shalt cause him to be thoroughly healed." Thus the force of the words, "in dying thou shalt die," is this, thou shalt thoroughly, utterly, totally die, or die for ever, without coming to life again. Thou hast justly for-

feited thy life and being, and shalt suffer a total and eternal extinction of it.

This sense and language of Law must be understood only as a declaration, that the penalty is just and due; which is all that can be done by Law as a rule of justice, declaring, in general, that he who is disobedient to his Maker hath justly forfeited his being; and that, in consequence of his disobedience, his Maker may justly deprive him of it. The Law can only declare the truth of this denunciation, as it hath no power to put it in execution: the execution of this threatening must necessarily and entirely rest in the hands and power of the Lawgiver; who therefore may mitigate, respite, or suspend it, as he, judging of circumstances, shall in his wisdom think proper. This is the prerogative of the Sovereign or Lawgiver, which is allowed to be fit and reasonable all the world over. For, if this were not allowed, in proper cases, there could be no such thing as pardon, or the mitigation of the sentence of Law, either with God or man; which in every nation, and throughout the whole universe, would be a state of things the most severe and the most dreadful.

Thus room is made for the exercise of favour or *grace*, without doing any violence to truth. The penalty indeed is due; but according to the true natures of things, there may be alleviating circumstances in the case of the transgressor, which, though Law can make no provision for them without destroying itself, yet the Lawgiver may, and, in reason and truth, ought to consider and allow, with respect to the infliction of the penalty. *Wisdom and goodness* ought to have place in him, and certainly do take place in God, as well as *justice*. Justice consists in executing the penalty of the Law according to the *letter* of it; which *letter* (2 Cor. iii. 6.) *killeth*, or destroys, the sinner, by subjecting him to eternal death, or to a total extinction of life; according to which rule, there could be no place for mercy, and the whole world must be ruined. But *wisdom and goodness* may mitigate the rigour of this constitution, not by abrogating the Law, as a rule of life; for so *the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy, just and good*, (Rom. vii. 12.) and can never be abrogated, being, in its general intention, agreeable to the everlasting and immutable nature of things: much less by finding out some expedient to satisfy *Law and justice*, which can be satisfied no other way than by the death of the offender; for justice, as used in this case, is acting strictly according to Law.

Nothing, therefore, but the execution of the Law can satisfy Justice. The wisdom and goodness of the Sovereign may do what the Law cannot do; that is to say, may suspend the execution of the sentence as long as he shall think fit; and so may leave what space he pleases for the sinner's repentance, and provide what means he shall think proper to induce him to repentance; and upon his repentance, may restore him to the assurance of eternal life, by an eternal suspension of the execution of the Law. For as to that, he cannot be limited to any space of time. If he hath a right by prerogative to suspend at all, it must be a discretionary right to suspend as long as he chooseth. This is *grace*, or *gospel*; by which

which the sinner may be restored to the hope of immortality, and actually invested in it, by the wisdom and favour of the Lawgiver. This new, or remedying constitution, the Apostle calls *spirit*, which quickens the sinner condemned to death by the letter of the Law, or makes him to live. 2 Cor. iii. 6. *Who also hath made us [Apostles] able ministers of the New Testament [or constitution], not of the letter but the spirit; for the letter kills, but the spirit giveth life.* Which spirit, he informs us, ver. 17, is *the Lord*, or the Gospel of our Lord. Now the Lord is that spirit, that life-giving spirit, or the latter Adam, who is a quickening, or life-giving, spirit, 1 Cor. xv. 45.

That the penalty, in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely, or utterly, die, is to be understood, not of the event, as if he should certainly die, but of the demerit of transgression, that he would deserve to die; and that, notwithstanding this threatening, the Sovereign might respite the execution of it, and not only allow the transgressor the benefit of repentance, but also appoint means to lead him to repentance, and to eternal life; may be clearly proved from Ezek. iii. 18. xxxiii. 8, 11, 14, 15. Where God repeats the very same sentence of the Law upon the wicked person, whom yet, at the same time, he charges the Prophet to warn, in order to bring him to repentance, promising pardon and life in case he did repent. Ezek. iii. 18. *When [באמר in dicendo me, whereas] I say [in the Law] unto the wicked מות תמות thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life.* Chap. xxxiii. 8. *When [whereas] I say [in the Law] unto the wicked, O wicked man, מות תמות thou shalt surely [utterly] die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, &c. Ver. 14. Again when [whereas] I say [in the Law] unto the wicked, מות תמות thou shalt surely [totally] die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right, ver. 15. — חיה לא יחיה חי vivendo vivet, be shall surely [totally, eternally] live, he shall not die.*

Thus Law in the rigorous sense is to be understood; and thus it stands in connexion with the pardon of transgressors, or their attainment to eternal life through the favour of the Lawgiver. That our first parents while in the garden of Eden, were under Law, or a rule of Action with the penalty of death annexed, is manifest from the very form of the prohibition—*But of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt utterly die.* And the Apostle Paul evidently supposes, that Adam was under Law, Rom. v. 13, 14. *For until the law [of Moses] sin was [committed] in the world; sin [though committed] is not imputed [unto death] in error, since the Law is not in being.* This supposes, 1. That Law is the only constitution which subjecteth the sinner to death. 2. That Law was not in being in the times preceding the giving of the Law of Moses. ver. 13. *Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses [while Law was not in being], even over them that had not sinned after the likeness of Adam's transgression.* That is to say, "Death reigned all the long space of about 2300 years from Adam to Moses, even over those who did not sin, as Adam did, against Law, making death the penalty of their sin; because during that period mankind were not under Law, but under the general

"covenant"

covenant, or constitution, of grace, given to *Adam* immediately after his transgression."

This evidently supposes, that *Adam* was under Law with the penalty of death annexed, while he was in the garden, or before he transgressed; and that the same severe constitution was again revived by *Moses*, after it had been suspended from the time of *Adam's* transgression till the Law was given by *Moses*. Whence the Apostle concludeth, that, as Death reigned all that long period, while sin was committed in the world, and yet no positive Law subsisted, making death the penalty of sin, he concludes, I say, that men, in general, did not die for their own transgressions, but in consequence of *Adam's* one transgression.

It must be observed, that the Apostle *Paul* doth not always use Law in the rigid sense, but sometimes for the whole Jewish Code, or the Old Testament. *Rom.* iii. 19; sometimes for any inward principle which influenceth and governeth a man—*vii.* 23; sometimes for a rule in general—*ii.* 27; and sometimes for a rule of action, with the penalty of death annexed. *Rom.* v. 20. *vi.* 15. *vii.* 4, &c.

CHAPTER X.

Of the INSTITUTION of MARRIAGE.

Gen. ii. 18, to the End.

ADAM's calling all beasts and fowls by names doth not imply, that he had a perfect knowledge of the natures and intrinsic qualities of animals; an opinion destitute of all evidence; but that God gave him dominion over them, as a master over his bond-servants, according to the force of the phrase, to call things or persons by name. *Plal.* cxlvii. 4. *ai.* xi. 26. *xliv.* 1. God allowing *Adam* to give the creatures what names he pleased, was the form of conveying or making over to him the property of them, and dominion over them. It hath also reference to the formation of woman; that *Adam*, our first parent, having surveyed all other animals, and having observed that they were created in pairs, for the propagation of their several kinds, might be sensible of his own solitary, destitute condition, and of the importance of his being also provided of a mate suitable to his nature, (which, by reason of its superior excellency, could not be matched with any of the brutal kind) a companion in body and mind, fit to cohabit with him, for mutual converse, delight, comfort, and assistance, especially for propagating the human species; without which the world would have been stocked with only brutes.

And it was fitting, or agreeable to the true nature of things, that the formation of the first woman should be attended with some circumstance expressive of the nearness of that relation which was to be the fountain of the

the existence of all mankind, and of all the near and dear relations so beneficial and comfortable to the life of man; and no circumstance could do that more significantly, than taking the woman out of a part of the man's body. Thus she became another self; and this was intended as a document to all posterity, that a wife should be regarded and treated as such. *Ephes. v. 28. So ought men to love their wives, as their own bodies; he that loveth his wife, loveth himself.*

Ver. 23. And [when the Lord God brought to him the woman, his wife, and informed him in what manner she was produced] *Adam said, [with much satisfaction and joy] this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh, the dearest to me of all creatures! she shall be called אִשָּׁה Woman, because she is taken out of אִישׁ Man [a sign of Adam's property in her], ver. 24. And the Lord God said, (Mat. xix. 4, 5.) Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.* Thus marriage was instituted; a sacred and honourable ordinance, of high distinction, as it is very nearly connected with the dignity and happiness of the human nature.

And by making only one woman for one man, God plainly declared, that this relation ought to subsist between two; as the Prophet well argues, *Mal. ii. 14, 15. And did not he, God, make but one couple, one man and one woman, as a rule to all mankind, that should descend from them? yet had he the residue of the spirit, and could then have created more men and women, if promiscuous conversation had been for the greater happiness of the world. And wherefore did he make but one couple? That he might seek a godly seed, זרע אלהים an excellent seed; that man and wife, in chaste wedlock, in sincere and undivided affection, might propagate a posterity to the honour and service of God. This is an argument against polygamy and divorce, confirmed by our Lord's wisdom and authority, Mat. xix. 3, 4, 5, 6. That mankind are brought into the world in a way suitably to the excellence of their nature. For, considering how weak and imperfect our nature is, and in how great ignorance and dissoluteness of manners we must necessarily grow up to manhood, without good discipline and instruction, it is evident this world must have been the most wild and disorderly scene imaginable, were the race of mankind propagated in a vagrant, licentious manner, without parents to own them, and by the tender care and affection to give them a good education. The production of an intelligent being, in the most helpless and exposed circumstances, and which grows up to a due degree of understanding, no otherwise than by good culture, ought to be attended with all the proper advantages of the propagator's power. And therefore the propagation of the human species, according to the true nature of things, ought to be guarded and directed by the best exercise of reason, and not left to be done in a loose and brutal manner. God did not create man in jest; nor should the origin of a man be made a matter of lewd jest, or of lawless passion. This is the rationale of marriage, and of modesty and sobriety.*

Adam had no choice, but his descendants have great need to exercise prudence in the choice of a relation so important and lasting. The advice and approbation of parents is, in this case, one of the best

And as marriage lessens the interests of parents in their children, it is generally not dutiful to alienate it to another without their knowledge and consent: nor should parents unreasonably oppose the lawful inclinations of their children.

Ver. 25. *And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed, being free from sin and guilt.*

C H A P. XI.

Of the TEMPTER who deceived EVE.

Gen. iii. 1—9.

HERE *Eve* is deceived and tempted to transgress the law of God by some moral agent, who could speak and argue, called by *Moses* *הנחש* the *Serpent*; which, he saith, *was more subtle than any other beast of the field which the Lord God had made.* But a beast of the field, how subtle or sagacious soever, could not speak and reason. Who then was the moral agent that deceived *Eve*? *St. Paul*, 2 Cor. xi. 3. speaks of the deceiver in the same manner as *Moses* doth; *I fear, lest by any means, as the Serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.* The Apostle did not suppose the *Corinthians* might be corrupted by the subtilty of an irrational creature; consequently, he did not suppose that *Eve* was beguiled by the subtilty of an irrational creature. But *St. John* comes nearer to the point in *Rev. xii. 9. xx. 2.* where he speaks of the serpent as a deceiver, and describes him after this manner, *and the great dragon was cast out, that old Serpent; called otherwise in Scripture, the Devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world.* A dragon is a huge overgrown serpent. *That old Serpent*, means that Serpent which of old, at the beginning of the world, deceived *Eve*, and still was deceiving the world. (And in several other places of Scripture, which we shall presently have occasion to take notice of, the Devil's temptation of *Eve* is plainly alluded to.) Therefore this *Serpent*, and the *Devil* and *Satan*, are synonymous, and mean one and the same being. Hence divines have justly concluded, that it was the *Devil* or *Satan*, an evil or malignant spirit, which tempted *Eve*, in the body, or assuming the form and shape, of a Serpent; which then might be a very beautiful as well as sagacious animal, familiar with *Adam* and *Eve*, and much admired by them. That there are wicked and malignant spirits, is undeniably true, from Scripture. 2 Pet. ii. 4. *For if God spared not the Angels that sinned, but ensnared by their ungodliness cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment.* [Or rather, cast them down into a low, wretched condition, in chains of darkness, delivered them to be reserved

unto judgment.] Jude 6. *And the Angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved* *δεσμοῖς αἰδίου ἐν ὥσφι* *in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.* Being cast down to hell, and delivered into chains of darkness, in St. Peter, is the same as being reserved in perpetual chains under darkness, in St. Jude; and may signify no more than, that they are degraded from their former high and glorious state, and chained, or confined to, a much lower, narrower, and darker situation, without any hope of favour, unto the day of judgment; when they, with all workers of iniquity, shall be cast into everlasting fire, *Mat. xxv. 41. Rev. xx. 10, 15.* For any thing therefore advanced in those two places, those fallen angels may at present reside in our air, and be permitted to wander about in the earth.

It must be observed, that there is an ambiguity in both the words, שָׂטָן *Satan*, and ΔΙΑΒΟΛΟΣ the *Devil*. The former, *Satan*, signifies any adversary among men and good angels, as well as among evil spirits. *Num. xxii. 32. And the Angel of the Lord said,—behold, I went out to withstand thee,* שָׂטָן לְפָנַי for an adversary, a *Satan*. So 2 Sam. xix. 22.—*Ye sons of Zeruiab are adversaries.* 1 Kin. v. 4. xi. 14. 23. 25. Psal. lxxi. 13. cix. 20, 29. *Peter was Satan, an adversary, to our Lord,* *Mat. xvi. 23.* And the unbelieving Jews were the *Satan*, or adversaries, who hindered St. Paul's return to *Thessalonica*, 1 *Thess. ii. 18.* ΔΙΑΒΟΛΟΣ, *Devil*, signifies an accuser, slanderer. *Job. vi. 70. — and one of you, Judas, is ΔΙΑΒΟΛΟΣ a Devil.* 1 Tim. iii. 11. *Their wives must be grave,* καὶ ΔΙΑΒΟΛΟΙ not Devils, i. e. accusers, slanderers. 2 Tim. iii. 3. *false accusers*, Tit. ii. 3. Thus it may be applied to any wicked persons, who slander, accuse, and persecute the people of God. And this ambiguity in the sense of those two words, שָׂטָן and ΔΙΑΒΟΛΟΣ, may render it doubtful how some particular passages of Scripture are to be understood.

That those two words are used to signify one and the same wicked spirit, who, with many others his angels, or under-agents, are conversant in our world, and endeavour to draw men into sin, and do mischief among us, is very evident from Revelation. As in the case of our first parents, of *Job*, whose children and substance were destroyed, and his body afflicted with a grievous disorder by *Satan*, *Job i. 12, &c. ii. 6, 7;* of our Lord, who was tempted of the *Devil*, or *Satan*, *Mat. iv. 1, 3, 10. Mark i. 13. Luke iv. 2.* Which temptation, under all its circumstances, can never be resolved into an allegory; much less can it be supposed to be all transacted within our Lord's own mind, as if the *Devil*, or *Satan*, was no other than the suggestions, or thoughts, that arose in his own heart, which is very absurd. Nor can the following texts be naturally understood of any other than a real Devil or Satan. *Mat. xiii. 39. The enemy that sowed the tares is the Devil,* [and his instruments] *Mark iii. 26. How can Satan cast out Satan?* *Joh. viii. 44. Ye are of your father the Devil.* *Acts x. 38. — Healing all that were oppressed of the Devil.* 2 Cor. xi. 13, 14. *For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ. And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an Angel of Light.* *Heb. ii. 14. That through death he might destroy him that had the power of* [subjecting our first parents

and their posterity, to] death, that is, the Devil. 2 Tim. ii. 16. — recover themselves out of the snare of the Devil. Jam. iv. 7. Resist the Devil, and he shall flee from you: 1 Joh. iii. 8. He that committeth sin, is of the Devil; for the Devil sinneth from the beginning [of the world, alluding to his tempting our first parents into sin;] for this cause the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the Devil. Jude 9. Yet Michael, the Archangel, when contending with the Devil, he disputed about the body of Moses. And generally, Satan and Devil are thus to be understood in the New Testament, the few places before mentioned only excepted: though, where the Devil is principally intended, his instruments, or wicked agents among men, may at the same time be connoted.

Besides Satan, or the Devil, the Scripture frequently mentions other evil spirits, called *δαίμονια*, *δαίμονες*, *Dæmons*, which we translate *Devils*. That these *Dæmons*, however understood in profane authors, do belong to the Devil's retinue, and may be his angels or under-agents, over whom he is chief or prince, will appear by comparing Mat. xii. 22, 24, — 28. Luke x. 17, 18. xi. 15, 18. Those who in the Gospels are said to be *δαμονιζομενοι* possessed by *Dæmons*, in Acts x. 38. are said to be oppressed of the Devil, *ὑπο τοῦ Διαβόλου*, as they were under the power of his agents. Thus we may conceive of the Devil and his angels, Mat. xxv. 41. the Dragon and his angels, Rev. xii. 7. He is the prince and head, and those *dæmons* are his subjects. They are often spoken of in the plural number, as being many; though Satan, or the Devil, is always in the singular, as being but one single spirit, and chief over all the rest. But, as before observed, his angels, or agents, may sometimes be included with him.

The characters which the Devil or Satan sustains in Scripture, are these, the great Dragon, or fierce Devourer, the old Serpent, full of villainous subtilty, Rev. xii. 9. The Wicked One, Mat. xiii. 38. 1 Joh. iii. 12. A Murderer and Liar, Joh. viii. 44. Ye are of your father, the Devil, and the lusts of your father will ye do. He was a murderer from the beginning, [in effecting the death of Adam and his posterity; and thus he may be said to have had the power of death, Heb. ii. 14.] and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, [as he was to Eve] and the father of it. The Accuser of the Brethren, Rev. xii. 10. [See Job i. 6—13. ii. 1—7.] A roaring Lion, [the lion roars only when he is hungry, Psal. xxii. 13. Ezek. xxii. 25.] seeking whom he may devour. The Prince of the World, meaning, as it is corrupt and wicked, John xii. 31. xiv. 30. xvi. 11. The Prince of the Power of the Air, the Spirit that now worketh in the Children of Disobedience, the idolatrous heathen, Ephes. ii. 2. Here the Devil is represented as a prince, or sovereign, at the head of a kingdom which stands in opposition to, and is at war with, the kingdom of Christ; who was manifested as his antagonist, that he might destroy the works of the Devil, 1 John iii. 8.

The *Dæmons* are characterized as the Devil's angels, Mat. xxv. 41. As unclean Spirits, Mark v. 2, 8, 12. Luke iv. 33, 36. viii. 27, 29. Evil, wicked, Spirits, Luke viii. 2.

These vicious spirits, the Devil and his angels, when permitted, are capable of doing any mischief to the estate, body, or mind, 1 *Sam.* xvi. 14. *Job* i. 12, &c. ii. 6, 7. *Mark* iii. 23, 26. *Luke* xiii. 16. 1 *Cor.* v. 5. 1 *Tim.* i. 20. Nor is there any absurdity, any thing inconsistent with the Divine Goodness, in supposing that evil spirits may inflict calamities and disorders upon mankind: for they are only instruments in God's hands, under his direction and controul, as much as any other cause whatever; and so must come under the same rules as any other means which Providence may employ in distressing or destroying human life, as storms, inundations, the passions and powers of wicked men, a putrid air, vitiated humours in the body, &c. In all these cases, whatever is the instrumental, God is the appointing and directing cause; and it would have been all one, whether he had sent a good or evil angel, or had only changed the temperature of the air, to destroy the *Israelites* by pestilence, 2 *Sam.* xxiv. 15, 16; or to slay *Sennacherib's* army, 2 *King.* xix. 35. 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 21. In correcting or punishing by diseases, or other distresses, God may use what instruments he pleases.

Thus far we may go upon this part of the subject, and not much further. The world of spirits lies so far out of our sight, that we can know no more of them, than what is revealed; nor have we principles sufficient to enable us to form clear and complete notions of every thing said concerning them even in Revelation.

That which most of all requires our attention, is, that the Devil delighteth in seducing mankind to sin against God, and takes every advantage, and uses every wile to effect his wicked purpose. *Rev.* xii. 9. *The great dragon, called the Devil and Satan, deceiveth the whole world.* *Mat.* xiii. 39. *The enemy that sowed them, the tares, i. e. wicked men, is the Devil.* Of which we have a specimen in his temptation of our first parents. He concealed himself in the body, or shape, of a Serpent, probably at that time a creature admired by *Adam* and *Eve* for its beauty and sagacity. He first addressed the woman, when alone, and at a distance from her husband; and first endeavoured to weaken her sense of the obligation of the Divine Prohibition, by representing it as uncertain or unreasonable, *ver.* 1. *Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree in the garden?* "Surely you mistake him; it can never be so; for why should God debar you of any of the innocent and delightful fruits this garden yields?" The woman exposed herself to the greatest danger by deliberating with the Tempter, upon a matter which she should not have heard so much as called in question without abhorrence. But she was not aware of his wicked design; and therefore, in much simplicity, gave him a full account of the law they were under, *ver.* 2, 3. Which only gave him, on the other hand, an opportunity of contradicting it by a most bold and impudent lie, *ver.* 4. *Ye shall not surely die.* Yea, he assures her, they should receive great advantage by eating the forbidden fruit, *ver.* 5. *For God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.* To favour his assertion, he perverts the word of God, by wresting the name God had given the tree; as if it had been called the *Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil*, because God was aware it would endow them with the most exalted and extensive knowledge; whereas it had its name upon a very different account.

Thus Satan persuades men to have hard thoughts of God, as if he envied our happiness, and laid the restraints of his law upon our appetites out of ill-will; but infinite Goodness is not capable of envy. Thus he tempteth us to be uneasy in the condition Providence has allotted us, and prompts us to be ambitious of things too high for us. And thus he deludeth with false hopes of benefit and advantage from sin; and, when this last point is gained, we fall an easy prey to the Tempter. *ver. 6. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat.* "She saw it was to be desired to make one wise." What wrought this opinion in *Eve* was, possibly, the assurance the Serpent gave her, that he which, she very well knew, before was, like other brutes, dumb and irrational, was, by the admirable virtue of the fruit, advanced in speech and reason, as she saw, to an equality with herself, the most excellent creature in the earth; and, therefore, she needed not doubt but it would, in the same proportion, exalt the human nature to the high perfection of the angelic order. This would pass for demonstration with her, who knew not that it was an evil spirit that acted and spake in the Serpent. But this is only my own conjecture. — *And she gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat:* being, probably, persuaded (besides the arguments the Serpent used with *Eve*) by the strong affection they had for each other. Thus the Devil, by tempting our first parents to transgress the law, subjected them, and their posterity in them, to eternal death. Thus he was a murderer, and may be said to have *had the power of death.* Heb. ii. 14.

C H A P. XII.

Reflections on the DEVIL'S TEMPTATIONS.

BY searching the Scriptures we have found, that there is a malicious Spirit which, by Divine Permission, ranges about this world, attended with many more of the same depraved nature; and, as any opportunity offers, is endeavouring to draw men from the practice of virtue, into all wickedness and alienation from the truth.

To prevent any cavils against the scriptural account of this wicked Spirit, let it be well observed,

I. That we cannot be sure, from any unassisted knowledge or observation of our own, that this earth is not frequented by numerous spirits of a nature much superior to the human. Our knowledge even of the animals which naturally belong to our globe, hath been, and probably still is, very defective. Without the help of microscopes, we could never have discerned vast tribes of insects, which we now plainly see do live

and move even in our own bodies, and in all parts of the earth and water; and even with this advantage of sight, there may still be a world of smaller animals, which our senses cannot reach. Much more may myriads of spirits be mixed amongst us, which come not under our observation. Therefore, as without the aid of microscopes we should never have discovered the most numerous part of the inhabitants of our earth; so neither, without the light of Revelation, can we be ascertained, what spirits are and act in the region of the air. And Revelation is a mean as proper, at least, for discovering the one, as our own artificial inventions for discovering the other. But Revelation informs us, that angels, both good and bad, are conversant in this world; which may be true, though we have no distinct, sensible perceptions of their existence and operations. Under former dispensations of religion they might appear, and act in a sensible manner; but under the present dispensation they may, for wise reasons (particularly, because we are now sufficiently instructed in their nature and agency), be wholly invisible: nor may we be capable of distinguishing their secret internal impressions from the suggestions of our own minds; or the external, kind assistances of good angels, or the malicious injuries of evil angels, from the common course of Providence.

II. That we are now upon trial hath been already proved; and that our trial is well and wisely adjusted, cannot be doubted. We ourselves are by no means capable of judging what kind of trials are most suitable to our own spirits, because we know but little of the nature of them. To settle the kind and degree of our Trials, belongs entirely to him who alone understands the nature of our minds, and the designs of his own wisdom. Therefore, if we are shocked when we hear God hath permitted many evil spirits to range our world, and to exercise their malice in tempting mankind, we are really shocked at our own ignorance, seeing this method of trial, as well as the rest, is under regulations of infinite wisdom, and designed for the purposes of infinite goodness.

OBJECTION. "Suppose God hath for wise ends permitted such beings to mingle among mankind, is it not very strange that any should be found so malicious as to employ that permission to the worst of purposes? How can we suppose any spirits, any intelligences, especially of a superior nature, so far abandoned to all sense of goodness and virtue, as to endeavour without ceasing the corruption and perdition of their fellow-creatures?"

ANSWER. That wickedness exists in the universe, is too plain from the state of things in that part of it which we inhabit; where we see great numbers, in spite of their own reason and understanding, and of all the instances of God's love and goodness, and of all the most evident and powerful arguments to virtue and piety, who not only are very vicious themselves, but take an unnatural pleasure in tempting and corrupting others, and making them as bad as themselves. It cannot then be hard to suppose, that there are other spirits, in other circumstances, who, in the same manner, oppose God; that is to say, oppose truth and virtue. For the Devil opposeth and setteth himself against God, not by might and power, as if he were able to contend with the Almighty, but only

as he opposeth virtue and truth; just as wicked men do among ourselves. Indeed, we men are under strong temptations from the flesh, and the objects that relate to it; but the spirits we are speaking of, may be under as strong temptations of some other kind, that we are not acquainted with; they may, by some sinful pursuits and compliances, have sunk themselves into the last degrees of moral pravity, and even be more wicked than the wickedest man in the earth, more blind to the goodness of God, and more fearless of his wrath. Nor are superior natural abilities an absolute security against the very worst moral corruption: for we do actually find, that great knowledge and understanding are so far from always making men good and virtuous, that, on the contrary, these are often in a high degree the instruments of sin and disobedience; being wholly employed in finding out pleas and pretexts for the most abandoned iniquity.

Thus you see it is very possible such vicious spirits may be, may be mixed among us, and be permitted to tempt us; and, according to Scripture representations, they are very dangerous enemies. For,

I. Satan is continually going about seeking all advantages against us, Job i. 7. *The Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Satan answered, and said,— From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.* And from the query in the next verse, *Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil?* and also from what our Saviour saith to Peter, Luke xxii. 31. *Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat;* it appears, that he is inquisitive into the characters of men, and busily seeks, and gladly lays hold of any occasion to try, and, if possible, to overthrow their integrity. 1 Cor. vii. 5. *Defraud you not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.*

II. We may suppose a spirit of superior faculties to be very subtle in understanding our various constitutions and inclinations, and the particular sins to which our circumstances do expose us; and in laying his baits, and addressing his temptations accordingly.

III. Such a tempter can apply a great variety of machinations, devices, [*ποικίλα*, 2 Cor. ii. 11.] and wiles [*μεθοδισαί*, Ephes. vi. 11,] to deceive. This is seen in the case of *Eve*. And in tempting our Lord, it is very observable, how he varied his devices, and shifted the scene of temptation, to fix, if possible, some stain upon his spotless mind. He can put himself into any shape, either of terror, or pleasing allurements; either as a roaring lion, or an angel of light, [2 Cor. xi. 14]. Sometimes he works by his agents, employing those who are already insnared to draw in others; so *Eve* was his tool to tempt *Adam*: sometimes injecting into our minds unrighteous, impure suggestions, [Luke xxii. 3. *Acts* v. 3.] sometimes taking the word out of our heart, [Luke viii. 12.] or mixing tares with the good seed, [Mat. xiii. 25.] and corrupting our minds from the simplicity that is in Christ.

But then, all this must be understood under the following restrictions.

1. That the Devil can neither hurt us, nor so much as attempt to hurt

hurt us, further than God permits. He is not like the pretended evil god of the *Manichees*, eternal, self-existent, almighty, and independent, but as much under the power of God as the weakest reptile under our feet. When God gives him a commission, he cannot act beyond it; and when he has no commission, he is chained up and can do nothing. He is therefore no other than an agent, entirely and always in God's hand, to be used as he sees fit.

2. Nor can he any ways pollute our minds, further than we ourselves do consent. If God permits, possibly he may work upon the humours of the body, he may inflame our passions, abuse our imaginations, or suggest evil things to our thoughts; but unless we willingly admit those impressions, he cannot possibly stain our consciences with sin.

3. God hath not only furnished means and strength to resist him, but hath appointed that, if we do resist him, he shall be conquered and vanquished. *Jam. iv. 7. Resist the Devil, and he will, he shall, he must, flee from you*; not by his own choice, but by the will and power of God. *The God of our peace and safety shall bruise Satan under our feet.* And such a victory shall turn to the praise and glory and establishment of our virtue. Hence it follows,

1. That it must be our own act and deed if we are overcome by the temptations of the Devil. It is common for people to consider themselves as altogether *passive* in this case, and to ascribe the wickedness they commit to the power of temptation; whereas, in truth, so far as we are tempted *effectually*, we are *active*, we consent and agree to the temptation, we are drawn away of our own lust and enticed, *Jam. i. 14.* Satan tempts, yet can have no advantage over us but what we choose to give him. And therefore,

2. It must be an aggravation of any crime, that it was done under the power and influence of this wicked spirit. For we must be *the children of disobedience*, we must have abandoned ourselves to wickedness, before Satan can *work in us*. If Satan can fill our hearts, consider in what a wretched condition we must be. We must have abused the faculties of our minds; we must have despised all the riches of Divine Goodness; we must have shut our eyes against the light of saving truth, hardened our hearts against the fear of God, seared our consciences, stifled many and strong convictions, done despite to the Spirit of Grace; we must have withdrawn ourselves from God, till he hath forsaken us; we must have advanced from one degree of iniquity to another, till our hearts are prepared to be the seat and residence of the unclean spirit, the murderer, the father of lies, the prince of darkness. A condition unspeakably deplorable!

With men of virtue and piety he hath no power, though he may vex and assault them, but only with the vicious; and they not only imitate his wickedness, which is bad enough, and constitutes him their *father*, but likewise are under his government, which is still worse, and constitutes him their prince and ruler. Most dreadful case, to be the children of such a father, the subjects of such a prince, the children of perdition, the subjects of the enemy of all righteousness! To have the powers of our minds, designed for the noblest acts and enjoyments, under the dominion of error and lust; to have the spirits created for eternal happiness in

in union with God, in slavery to the vilest of beings; to have the souls for whom Christ shed his blood, to deliver them from iniquity, to purify them into the Divine Image, and to prepare them for everlasting salvation,—to have those souls quite insensible to all that is true and excellent, heavenly and divine, guided by the grand deceiver, in the power of the destroyer, and by him pushed on in the way of iniquity to eternal perdition; how frightful is the reflection! how dreadful must the state of such souls be!

To prevent our falling into such a sad condition, and to secure ourselves from the encroachments of this wicked spirit, let us ever be mindful that we have such an enemy, and that, without due care and circumspection, we shall fall under his power. Let us carefully guard our hearts, and observe well the temper and frame of our minds, that we may seasonably restrain every inordinate affection, and immediately reject every evil thought and suggestion which starts up in our minds. Be sober, be vigilant. Nothing gives this adversary greater advantage than sensual indulgences. Mortify the flesh with the affections and lusts. Shun all intemperance and excess; and never dare to venture, how little soever, into the way of temptation and sin. And let us be sure to keep close to God in prayer, and other exercises of religion. Thus we shall put ourselves under the banner of the Prince of Life; the Lord Jesus Christ, and shall be kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation.

C H A P. XIII.

Of the Consequences of ADAM'S TRANSGRESSION.

Gen. ii. 7, to the End.

WE are now come to a very grand point in Theology, the Fall of Man, or the Consequences of *Adam's* Transgression upon himself and his posterity. Which Consequences Divines, both Papist and Protestant, have generally, and for a long tract of time, represented to be those that follow, namely, “the guilt of *Adam's* first sin imputed to, or charged upon, all his posterity — a total defect of that righteousness wherein he is supposed to have been created — the corruption of the human nature, whereby all mankind are utterly indisposed, disabled, and made opposite unto all that is spiritually good, and wholly inclined to all evil, and that continually; which corruption of our nature is the source of all wickedness that is committed in the world. — Further, by *Adam's* Transgression all mankind were deprived of communion with God — and all, as soon as ever they come into the world, under his displeasure and curse, being by nature the children of wrath, bond-slaves to Satan, justly liable to all punishments.”

“punishments in this world, and in the world to come, to an everlasting separation from the comfortable presence of God, the most grievous torments in soul and body without intermission in hell-fire for ever.”

This is an affair of the most dreadful importance, and requires to be examined with all possible care and impartiality; for an error in this point will affect the whole scheme of Christianity, pervert and abuse our consciences, and give us very wrong notions of God and of ourselves. Upon this article I have examined the Scriptures, with diligence and impartiality, in the treatise entitled — *The Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, proposed to free and candid Examination* — in the study of which this is a proper place to exercise your thoughts and judgments.

[* Adam having transgressed the law, not only lost a claim to life, but became obnoxious to death, which was *death in law*, or eternal death. And had the law been immediately executed, his posterity, then included in his loins, must have been extinct, or could have had no existence at all; for, the covenant of innocence being broken, there was no covenant or constitution subsisting upon which *Adam* could have the least hope of the continuance of his own life, and consequently, could have no prospect of any posterity. Thus *in Adam all die*. While things were in this state, under broken law, and before a promise of favour, or grace, in this interval, for any thing *Adam* could know, he, and the whole world in him, were utterly lost and undone for ever. But our merciful God and Father had quite different views; he graciously intended to make *Adam's* sin, and his being exposed to eternal death, an occasion of erecting a new dispensation, a dispensation of grace in the hands of a Mediator. According to which, *Adam* was assured that he should not immediately die, but should live to have a posterity by his wife. So *Adam* understood what the Lord God said, *ver. 15*. And upon this he gave his wife a new name, (*ver. 20.*) חַיָּה *Life*, or *Life-giving*, for joy that mankind were to be propagated from her, when he expected nothing but immediate death in consequence of his transgression.]

[† God graciously intended, after *Adam's* Transgression, to erect a dispensation of grace, for the redemption of mankind; which grace was declared, and, consequently, which dispensation was established, (*Gen. iii. 15. And I will put enmity, &c.*) before the sentence of death was pronounced upon *Adam* (*ver. 19. Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return*). Death therefore, in that sentence, stands under the new dispensation, or the dispensation of grace, and for that reason cannot be *Death in LAW*, or eternal death; but *death in DISPENSATION*, or death appointed for wise and good purposes, and to be continued only so long as God should think fit. And thus also *all die in Adam*; thus *by man came death*; thus *by one man sin entered into the world, and death by*, or in consequence

* Take this in, as a note, p. 18 of *Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin*, at the paragraph, 1. *Whereas Adam had before, &c.*

† Take this in, as a note, p. 66 of *Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin*, at No. *Immediately upon the annulling the first covenant, &c.*

quence of, his *sin*. But it was the high and glorious purpose of God, that his beloved Son, *the seed of the woman*, having, in our flesh, performed the most perfect and complete obedience, should be invested with dominion and power to raise all men from the dead, and to give eternal life to all them that tread in the steps of his obedience. Thus, *as by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead; for, as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive.* 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. Thus, *as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification. For as by one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall the many be made righteous.* Rom. v. 18, 19.]

C H A P. XIV.

Of the Origin of SACRIFICES.

Gen. iv. 1—6.

HERE Cain and Abel perform an act of religious devotion, by way of Oblation or Sacrifice. The question is, whether this kind of worship was of divine or human institution. They who are of the latter opinion alledge, “that we read of no command from God for sacrificing; therefore men did it of their own heads, out of a grateful inclination to return unto God some of his own blessings, and to acknowledge him the absolute proprietor of all their enjoyments; though they had no directions from him about it.” Answer. This seems highly improbable. For how came Abel to offer his Sacrifice in faith of God's acceptance, (*Heb. xi. 4.*) if his faith had nothing to warrant it but his own imagination? Human imagination, or opinion, never was, or ever can be, either the ground or object of faith. It is said, *Gen. iv. 4.* that God had respect to, or shewed his approbation of, both Abel and his offering; or in the Apostle's words, *he obtained witness, that himself was righteous, God testifying of his gifts, that they were right, and offered in a right manner.* On the other hand, he censured Cain as having presented his Oblation in such a manner as was not pleasing to God; which evidently supposes a previous institution, and a rule which Cain was, or might have been, acquainted with. For, had there not been such a rule given, how could he have been blamed for not observing it? It is absurd to say, he transgressed a rule of his own imagination and invention.

The institution not being mentioned in a history so concise, argues nothing. Other things are also omitted, as religious assemblies, *Enoch's* prophecy, *Noah's* preaching, the peopling of the world, or the increase of *Adam's* family. Things well known, or generally supposed, when the

the historian wrote, needed not to be mentioned, but might be taken for granted. The only proper and conclusive argument would be to prove, "that in those early days they had no communication with, or revelation from God; and therefore, having no way of knowing what the mind of the Lord was, were under a necessity of inventing something of their own." But this is far from being the case. God, in some visible form, frequently appeared, and made his mind known to Adam, and to all the succeeding Patriarchs mentioned in the book of *Genesis*, for the space of 2315 years; yea, he conversed and reasoned with and instructed Cain himself. When therefore Adam, and all the other Patriarchs, had the fullest opportunity of knowing from God himself, what kind of worship was most acceptable to him, there was no need of their own invention; and it is absurd to suppose that they followed no other guide.

In the infancy of the church they wanted direction, and without doubt were directed in every thing relating to religion especially, so far as was agreeable to that dispensation. Doubtless Adam was instructed by God to sacrifice; and it is not improbable that those beasts, with the skins of which Adam and Eve were clothed, *Gen. iii. 21.* were slain as Sacrifices. God certainly instructed our first parents in the faith and worship which the alteration in their circumstances required. Having made a most gracious covenant with them, (*ver. 15*) it is not unreasonable to suppose, that he also signified to them, that they should, for a perpetual ratification and assurance of it to their faith, offer to him Sacrifices; for by the blood of Sacrifices covenants were ratified in after-times. The eating of the tree of life, was a covenanting action, (assuring immortality to their continued obedience) suitable to a state of innocence. But the maceration of a living creature, (expressing the deadly nature of sin, at the same time that it assured them of eternal life through a sacrificed Redeemer) was more suitable to a state of guilt.

Ver. 3. Cain brought *בא* of the fruit of the ground, &c. ver. 4. And Abel also brought of the firstlings of the flock, &c. "As there were some solemn times of making their devout acknowledgments to God; so, I doubt not, there was some set place, where they assembled for that purpose. For the Hebrew word for brought, is never used in relation to domestic, or private Sacrifices; but always in relation to those public Sacrifices which were brought to the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. As *Lev. iv. 4. He shall bring באבא the bullock to the door, &c.* Which occurs all along, especially in the ninth chapter of that book.

"And therefore, I suppose, they brought these Sacrifices, here mentioned, to some fixed [public] place, where the *Shechinah*, or glorious presence of God appeared. For, as they must have some settled place, where they [publicly] performed sacred offices, it is most reasonable to think it had, in those early days, respect to the *Shechinah*, or Divine presence, as well as afterwards under the Mosaic dispensation, [when the Divine Presence resided] in the tabernacle and temple. And therefore they are said to appear before God, [*Exod. xxiii. 17.*

"xxxiv. 24.

“ xxxiv. 24. Psal. xlii. 2, &c. or to present themselves before the Lord, “ Job. i. 6.”*]

That some visible token of the presence of God appeared in their religious assemblies in those earliest days of the church, and spake and conversed with them, as occasion required, is evident enough. So the Lord God appeared frequently and familiarly to *Adam*. He held a conference with *Cain* in such a manner as plainly shews it was no extraordinary thing. And when the sons, or children, of God came together to present themselves before the Lord, the Lord is represented as discoursing with *Satan* about the character and circumstances of *Job*. Job. 6—12. ii. 1—7.

While men were not so numerous, but that they might all assemble together at one place, probably the *Shechinah* stately appeared among them every sabbath. But when they were so numerous, that they could not ordinarily meet together once a week, and therefore were under a necessity of performing their worship in separate and remote places; yet the *Shechinah*, or token of the Divine Presence, might still remain and appear as usual in that original place, where *Adam* and his immediate descendants had first attended upon divine service, and where the Patriarchs, in a right line descended from *Adam*, had their place of residence. There, probably, *Noah* builded his altar, and there the Lord conversed with him. Gen. viii. 20, &c. ix. 1—18. There *Rebekah* went to inquire of the Lord, Gen. xxv. 22, 23; and she received an answer, probably, from the *Shechinah* or Divine Presence.

From all this it seems not unlikely, that *Cain* and *Abel*'s Offerings were performed before the whole assembly of *Adam*'s family (which then must have been considerably increased), and that the divine acceptance of the one, and rejection of the other, was signified by some visible mark, which appeared and was observed by the whole congregation. It would add very much to *Cain*'s disgust to find himself so openly disparaged, and sunk so much in the favour of God, and the esteem of the whole family, below his younger brother; over whom, on that sole account, as he was the first-born, he claimed pre-eminence, and expected, whatever his character was, pious or impious, to have been preferred before him.

The mark by which the Lord God testified his acceptance of *Abel* and his Sacrifice, was, probably, a stream of fire issuing from the *Shechinah*, which consumed his Sacrifice. So Gen. xv. 17. *A smoking furnace and burning lamp*, i. e. the *Shechinah*, passed between the pieces of the Sacrifice, and consumed them, in confirmation of the covenant. And we have many other examples of this kind in sacred History; as when *Moses* offered the first great burnt-offering, Lev. ix. 24; when *Gideon* offered upon the rock, Judg. vi. 21; when *David* stayed the plague, 1 Chron. xxi. 26; and *Solomon* consecrated the temple, 2 Chron. vii. 13; and when *Elijah* contended with the *Baalites*, 1 Kings xviii. 38, &c. whence the *Israelites*, Psal. xx. 3. wishing all prosperity to their king, pray that God would accept [תִּשְׂרֹף תִּשְׂרֹף] turn into ashes] his burnt-offering.

Ver. 6, 7.

* Bishop Patrick's Comment. in loco.

Ver. 6, 7. The Lord God reproved *Cain* for the disgust and indignation he had conceived against his brother, instructing him in terms of divine acceptance. *If thou dost well, shalt thou not be accepted?* Most certainly — For I have an impartial regard to true piety, wheresoever I find it. *But if thou dost not well, sin* (i. e. the punishment of sin, as ver. 13, and chap. xix. 15, and several other places,) *lieth couching at the door, ready to fall upon thee; and unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.* Three things are here suggested to appease his resentment. 1. That the reason of his not being respected was not in his brother, but in himself; for, if he had done well, he would have been as much respected. 2. That, if he did ill, he had no reason to expect the Divine favour, but the reverse. 3. That this should not alter his civil right, nor give *Abel* any authority over him, but he should still retain the privilege of his birth-right. Note — This shews, that the privileges of his birth-right had been previously settled, either by divine appointment, or approbation.

But the rancour of *Cain's* mind could not thus be cured. Being of the *Wicked One*, the murderess, who had lately attempted to destroy all mankind, he took an opportunity, and slew his brother. Possibly the next sabbath, *Abel's* place being empty in the assembly of *Adam's* family, the Lord addressed himself to *Cain*, charged him with his crime, and, in punishment of it, banished him from the country where *Adam* and his family resided; by rendering the ground barren to him, insomuch that, notwithstanding all his endeavours, it should not yield him any increase. This would necessarily oblige him to go seek a subsistence in some other place. To this sentence *Cain* remonstrates as too severe, [and by the bye, his familiar, indeed too familiar, manner of answering the *Shetnah*, shews, that such appearances of the Divine Presence were common and customary] apprehending he should thereby be hid from the face of the Lord, (ver. 14.) or deprived of his care and inspection, and considered by all mankind as a strolling brute, exposed to their hatred, and in continual danger of being destroyed. But God, who for wise and holy ends often protects and prolongs the lives even of very wicked men, intended that *Cain* should live; either that he might have space to repent, or, being impenitent, might remain a monument of Divine Justice; and therefore, before the whole assembly, threatened a worse punishment than *Cain's* to the man who should, by killing him, defeat the divine sentence, or frustrate his grace.

And the Lord set a mark *אֶמְלָךְ* upon *Cain*, &c. In the Hebrew it is, *And the Lord set, or exhibited, a true token to Cain, that no one who met him, should kill him; i. e. gave him some pledge or assurance, declared either in words, as by an oath, or by some outward token, that his life should be preserved.* So the spies gave *Rabab* a token, *אֶמְלָךְ אֲמָתָהּ*, that her life, and the lives of all her relations, should be preserved. *Joshua* ii. 12—14. This token to *Rabab* seems to have been a solemn oath; for the scarlet cord was not a token to *Rabab*, but to the spies, to distinguish her house. N. B. I do not find in Scripture, that *אֶמְלָךְ* ever signifies a mark, or brand, impressed upon a man's body, but always some external assurance, or pledge given by God. *Gen.* ix. 13. xvii. 16.

1 Sam. ii. 34. xiv. 10. 2 King. xix. 28. *Isai.* xxxviii. 7, 8. *Jer.* xlv. 29, &c. &c.

Ver. 16. And Cain, by force of the divine curse, went out from the presence of the Lord, i. e. out of the assembly where the Lord appeared, and was worshipped, and never enjoyed the blessings and advantages which attended the assembly any more.

C H A P. XV.

Of the SHECHINAH, and Divine APPEARANCES.

HAVING had occasion, in the foregoing chapter, to mention the *Shechinah*, (a rabbinical word from שכן *to dwell*;) which is used to signify a glorious Appearance, covered, or attended with a cloud, denoting the extraordinary presence of God, who is necessarily every where present; this may be a proper place to examine the Scripture upon the point of Divine Appearances. They are mentioned in both parts of the holy Scripture; sometimes without taking any notice of a visible glory, and often expressly mentioning it; as in the following places. *Gen.* xv. 17. *The smoking furnace and lamp of fire*, וּשְׁרָפָה וְנֵר, are justly supposed to correspond to the cloud and pillar of fire, afterwards mentioned, as representing the Divine Presence. Probably, in a visible glory the Lord appeared to *Abraham*, *Gen.* xvii. 1; and to *Isaac*, *chap.* xxvi. 2; and certainly to *Moses* in the bush, *Exod.* iii. 2. The *Shechinah* was also in the cloud and pillar of fire, *Exod.* xiii. 21. For it was the same cloud that afterward rested upon the tabernacle, when it was set up, and is called *the Cloud of the Lord*, *Exod.* xl. 38. *Numb.* x. 34. For the glory of the Lord was within the tabernacle upon the mercy-seat, as the cloud was on the outside of it. *Exod.* xl. 34-35. And it is there described, as in *Exod.* xiii. 21. that it appeared as a cloud upon the tabernacle by day, and as a fire by night. *Exod.* xl. 38. *Numb.* ix. 15, 16.

Thus it conducted and guarded them in their journeys, [and then alone was ordinarily seen by the whole congregation] *Exod.* xl. 36. *Numb.* ix. 17, 18, &c. [*Isaiah* alludes to this *chap.* iv. 5, 6.] And, as thus the token of the Divine Presence went before them, the Lord is said to go before them, and to lead them by this cloud. And out of this cloud, or rather from the glory of the Lord, within the tabernacle, the Lord spake unto *Moses* what he spake and delivered in the books of *Exodus*, *Leviticus*, and *Numbers*. *Numb.* vii. 89. And when *Moses* went into the tabernacle of the congregation, to speak with him [God], then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy-seat, that was upon the ark of the testimony, between the two Cherubims, and he spake unto him; agreeably

ably to what God had said, *Exod. xxv. 22. I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two Cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.* And there, as upon a throne, between the Cherubims, the glory of the Lord had its residence in the holy place in Solomon's temple, after it had taken possession of the house, at the consecration of it. *1 King. viii. 10, 11.* [and there it continued till the Babylonish captivity.] Hence God is said to dwell between the Cherubims. *1 Sam. iv. 4. 2 Sam. vi. 2. 2 King. xix. 15. Psalm. lxxx. 1, &c.* The glory of the Lord appeared to *Isaiah* in the temple, *Isai. vi. 1.* and to *Ezekiel*, with many awful circumstances. *Ezek. i. 28. iii. 23. x. 4. xi. 23. xliii. 2, 4, 5. xlv. 4.* The glory of the Lord shone round about the shepherds, and the angel of the Lord came upon them, *Luke ii. 8, 9.* and to the three Disciples at the transfiguration, *Mat. xvii. 5.* While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, this is my beloved Son, &c. The Shechinah appeared to *Saul*, *Acts ix. 3.* Suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven; and to *Peter* in the prison. *Acts xii. 7.*

These are the most remarkable Divine Appearances mentioned in Scripture. Now the question is, Who, in such instances, was the person that appeared and spake? For example, *Exod. iii. 14,* it is written, *And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.* Who was it that spake to *Moses*? Or what notion are we to form of that being who pronounced those words, *I AM THAT I AM*? What makes the inquiry necessary is this, that in the second verse it is said, *The ANGEL OF THE LORD appeared in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush.* And yet it is said, concerning the same person, *ver. 4. When the LORD saw that he turned aside to see, GOD called to him out of the midst of the bush. ver. 6. Moreover he said, I am the GOD of thy father, the GOD of Abraham, the GOD of Isaac, &c.* And, *ver. 14. GOD said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM. ver. 15. GOD said unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, the LORD GOD of your fathers hath sent me unto you.* Now, most certain it is, that it was the ANGEL of the LORD that appeared to *Moses*; and certain it is, that the Angel of the Lord, that appeared to *Moses* in the bush, did, out of the bush, pronounce the several sentences I have quoted. It was the Angel of the Lord who said, *I am the GOD of thy father: I AM THAT I AM.* But the Angel of the Lord God is not the Lord God, whose Angel he is. How then can it be said, that the Lord God appeared and spake to *Moses*? This is the difficulty; and the solution is ready, and very clear.

The solid and incontestable foundation of the solution is laid by our Lord himself, who perfectly understood the whole affair of Divine Appearances, in *John v. 37. And the Father himself, who hath sent me, hath born witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. John i. 18. No man hath seen God at any time. He is the invisible God, whom no man hath seen, or can see.* It is often said, that the Lord, the most high God, appeared to the Patriarchs, to *Moses*, and to the Prophets, the ancestors of the Jews; but, according to our Lord's rule, the Appearance, form, or shape, which they saw, was not the Appearance

Appearance of the Lord God himself, for never, at any time, did they see his shape. Again, it is often said, that the most High God *spake* to the Patriarchs, to *Moses*, and the Prophets; but our Lord affirms, that they never heard his voice at any time. How shall we reconcile this seeming inconsistency?

The true solution, according to the Scriptures, is this: That the Lord God never *spake* or appeared in person, but always by a proxy, *nuncius*, or messenger, who represented him, and therefore *spake* in his name and authority, saying, *I am God all-sufficient; I am the God of Abraham; I AM THAT I AM.* Which words were pronounced by an Angel; but are true, not of the Angel, but of God, whom he represented, and upon whose errand he came. So a herald reads a proclamation in the king's name and words, as if the king himself were speaking. Or, to use a more common instance, so a brief is published in the king's name and language, as if the king himself were addressing the congregation where it is read. Thus, *GEORGE by the grace of God, &c. whereas it hath been represented to US, &c. therefore they have humbly besought US to grant unto them OUR Letters Patent, &c. unto which their request WE have graciously condescended, &c.* But much, surely, would he be mistaken, who should imagine, that the person who reads the proclamation, or the brief, was his Majesty KING GEORGE, because he useth his words, and speaks as if the king himself were speaking.

That this is a true representation of the case, will appear,

I. From the signification of the word ANGEL, [*αγγελος* ἄγγελος] which is a Greek word, and both in that language, and in the Hebrew, signifies a *messenger*, or *nuncius*, an *ambassador*; one who acts and speaks, not in his own name, or behalf, but in the name, person, and behalf of him that sends him. And thus the word is frequently rendered in our translation. And had it always been rendered the *messenger of the Lord*, instead of *the Angel of the Lord*, the case would have been very plain. But *Angel*, being a Greek word, which the English reader doth not understand, it throws some obscurity upon such passages.

II. It is in Scripture expressly said, that it was an *Angel*, a *nuncius*, or messenger of the Lord, who *spake*, even when the Lord himself is said, or supposed to speak. As *Gen. xvi. 7. The Angel* מלאך found Hagar; and, *ver. 10, said unto her, I will multiply thy seed exceedingly.* *Gen. xviii. 1. The Lord appeared unto Abraham, ver. 2. And he lifted up his eyes, and lo, three men, three Angels in the shape of men, stood by him.* Now one of those men, or Angels, was a *nuncius* sent particularly to Abraham; for, *ver. 10, he said, as he was sitting at meat, I will certainly return unto thee; and lo, Sarah shall have a son. And Sarah heard it, ver. 12, and laughed. Ver. 13. And the Lord, i. e. the Angel who spake in the Lord, said, Wherefore did Sarah laugh? Ver. 14. Is any thing too hard for the Lord? At the appointed time I will return unto thee, and Sarah shall have a son.* Again, *Gen. xxii. 15. And the Angel, or messenger, of the Lord called unto Abraham out of heaven, ver. 16, and said, by myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, that in blessing I will bless thee, &c.* Upon which place St. AUSTIN, quoted by Bp. PATRICK in his Commentary upon the place, argues in this manner.

“ In the beginning of this chapter, *ver. 1, 2*, we read, that God “ tempted [tried] Abraham, and bad him go, and offer up his son Isaac; “ but, *ver. 11, 12*. The Angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, “ and said, Lay not thy hands upon the lad. What is the meaning of this? “ Will they say, that God commanded Isaac to be slain, and that his “ Angel forbid it? and that Abraham obeyed the Angel who bid him “ spare his son, against God, who ordered him to slay him? This is “ ridiculous, and not to be endured. The plain meaning is, that God “ spake both times, in the one case, and the other; but he spake by “ an Angel, who was his minister. That is the reason Angels some- “ times speak as if they were the Lord, because they spake in the Lord’s “ name. Just as when a public crier in a court pronounces the sen- “ tence of the judge, it is not entered in the public records, that the “ crier pronounced that sentence, but the judge, in whose name and “ authority the crier pronounced it.” Thus St. AUSTIN. — In *Exod.* “ *iii. 2*. the Angel, *nuncius*, or messenger of the Lord, appeared unto “ Moses; and said, *I am the God of Abraham; I AM THAT I AM*; speak- “ ing not of himself, but of the Lord whose messenger he was.—*Joshua* “ *vi. 2*. The Lord said unto Joshua. It appears from *chap. v. 13, 14*. that “ it was not the Lord who spake, but an Angel, under the title of the “ Captain of the Lord’s Host.

Further, it is evident from every part of the law of Moses, that it was given and ordained by God, the LORD, the most high God; and in his name it is every where worded and enjoined, *Exod. xx. 1, 2*. And God spake all these words, saying, *I am the Lord thy God*. And the Lord said unto Moses. And Moses said unto the Lord. And yet it appears from repeated testimonies in the New Testament, that it was not the Lord, who immediately himself spake, either to Moses, or to all the people. Thus Stephen, a man full of faith, and of the Holy Ghost. *Acts vii. 35*. This Moses, whom they refused,—did God send to be a ruler, and a deliverer by the hands of the Angel, or messenger, who appeared to him in the bush; and who is called the Angel of his, God’s, presence. *Isai. lxiii. 9. ver. 28*. This [Moses] is he that was in the church in the wilderness, with the Angel who spake to him in Mount Sinai. [Note—it was an Angel, messenger, that spake to Moses in Mount Sinai.] *ver. 53*.—who have received the law by the disposition, in the Constitutions published by the ministry, of Angels. *Gal. iii. 19*. Wherefore then serveth the law of Moses? It was added, because of transgressions, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made; and it, the law, was ordained by the ministry of Angels. *Heb. ii. 2*. For if the word spoken by Angels was steadfast, meaning the law given by Moses. That law was spoken to him, and to all the people, by angels, who spake, not of themselves, but what was communicated to them from God.

III. The Jews very well understood the nature of those manifestations. They knew when a miraculous voice came to them, speaking as God himself would speak, that it was a messenger from God, who spake in his name and stead, *Gen. xvi. 7, 9*. The Angel of the Lord appeared and spake to Hagar; yet she knew it was a Divine Appearance, and that the Angel personated the most High God. Therefore, *ver. 13* she called the name of the LORD, that spake unto her, thou God seekest me.—

Gen. xxxii. 24

Gen. xxxii. 24. *There wrestled a man with Jacob.* Now Jacob knew that man was a messenger from God; and therefore, ver. 30. *he called the name of the place Peniel; for I have seen God face to face, i. e. I have seen an evident manifestation from God.* — The common token, that such were Divine Manifestations, was the glory which attended the messenger, who pronounced the words of the message. And whenever that glory appeared, the Jews knew the message came from God, whoever it was that brought it. Thus Luke ii. 9. *The Angel of the Lord came upon the shepherds, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them.* They knew the glory they saw was not the glory of the Angel, but a token of the Divine Presence and authority, signifying that the message came from the Lord. Therefore they say, ver. 15, *Let us now go — and see this thing, which the LORD hath made known unto us.* And so Saul knew the light shining from heaven, was the glory of the Lord, and an infallible proof of a Divine Manifestation. And, 2 Pet. i. 17. *He, our Lord Jesus Christ, received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came such a voice unto him from the excellent Glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.* Whoever the messenger was that uttered these words, the Disciples, that saw the transfiguration on the mount, knew that the thing came from God the Father; because *the voice, or words, came from the excellent Glory, or the Shechinah.*

It is very remarkable, that when our Lord was exalted to universal dominion, at the right-hand of God, as head of the church, he also had his ANGEL, Nuncius, or messenger, whom he dispatched upon the affairs of his government. Rev. i. 1. *The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he, Jesus, sent and signified it by his ANGEL unto his servant John.* And therefore, though the glorious appearance, Rev. i. 13—17. is rightly understood of our Lord, yet it was not he in person, but his ANGEL, Nuncius, or messenger, who represented him, and appeared and spake in his name. And so in other places of the *Revelation*; where, nevertheless, our Lord may justly be supposed to appear and speak.

We may here observe, that it hath been commonly supposed, that our Lord, before his incarnation, was the ANGEL that appeared in the *Shechinah*, and spake to Adam and the Patriarchs, to Moses and the prophets, and is called *the Angel of his presence*, Isai. lxiii. 9. *In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the Angel of his presence saved them; in his love and in his pity he redeemed them, and he bare them, and carried them all the days of old.* To this purpose they understand, John xii. 41. *These things said Esaias, when he saw his glory and spake of him, i. e. "saw, at that time, the glory of Christ, who was then the medium of divine manifestations, and spake of him, and of his times, or what would happen with respect to the reception of the Gospel, when he should preach it to the Jews."* [Dr. Doddridge.] But, *when he saw his glory*, may be well interpreted, "when he [Esaias] foresaw his glory, or the glorious manifestations, which God intended to make of himself to the Jews by his Son." [Dr. Clarke.] So John viii. 56. *Abraham saw, foresaw, my day, and was glad.* Thus also, as he tabernacled among the Jews in the cloud of glory, they judge *he was in the form of God*, Phil. ii. 9; which form, or

likeness he was not greedy of retaining, *but emptied himself of it, and took upon him the form of a servant.* But this form, or likeness of God, may refer to *the glory which he had with the father before the world was*, John xvii. 5. With regard to which he may also be said to be *the image of God*, 2 Cor. iv. 4. — *the image of the invisible God*, Col. i. 15. — *the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person*, Heb. i. 3. However, I should willingly admit that such expressions refer to the glorious appearances of the *Shechinah* under the Old Testament, were it not for this objection, that our Lord must then be supposed to publish the Law, and to preside over the Jewish dispensation, as well as over the Gospel; which seems to be quite inconsistent with John i. 17. *The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* See also Heb. i. 1, 2. ii. 2. [Here the Apostle's argument proceeds wholly upon the difference of the persons, the *Angels*, who published the law, and the *Lord Jesus Christ*, who published the Gospel; but his argument hath no strength at all, if those persons are the same *. See Mr. *Pierce* upon the text.]

Heb.

* But may we not distinguish between the *λογος* as a Proxy of Deity, or as personating the glorious Majesty of God in the *Shechinah*, and in that capacity, by the Holy Spirit, inspiring the Prophets, and presiding over the Angels at the giving of the law; and the same *λογος* acting and speaking to us, in his incarnate state, in the capacity of a Prophet? In the former capacity he may be considered in relation to God, as personating God, or as in the form of God, whose agent he was under every dispensation which God erected; and therefore as doing nothing in his own person. For thus, his person would coincide with that of the supreme God, and is not to be considered as different from him, but as acting in his name and authority. In the latter capacity he may be considered in relation to us, and to our salvation by the Gospel; for the accomplishment of which, he stooped so far as to take upon him our nature, and, not as personating God, but in quality of a Prophet sent from God, to publish among us in his own person and name, the promise of eternal life.

And must not this bring us under greater obligations to attend to him; and be sufficient to distinguish him as acting in delivering the law, and preaching the Gospel? He that was in the form of God, and represented God, when the law was delivered, and who delivered it by the ministry of Angels and of *Moses*; that transcendently glorious person afterwards became a man, and in his own person, and by his own ministry, delivered to us the Gospel. Doth not this, in a very peculiar manner, recommend to us the Gospel, and oblige us to attend to its doctrines? Heb. i. 1, 2. *God who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers BY THE PROPHETS, hath in these last days spoken unto us BY HIS SON, &c.* God always spake by Proxy. And the Apostle might speak as he doth, although it be true that our Lord was the Proxy of Deity under the Old Testament dispensation; for the Apostle here considers, not who was the Proxy of Deity, but by whom he immediately spake to the fathers in the Jewish church, and to us in the Christian church. And the opposition lieth between, not the Proxies or Representatives of Deity, but between THE PROPHETS in the former dispensation, and THE SON OF GOD in the latter. By his Son, as his Proxy, he spake to the Prophets, and by the Prophets he spake to the Old Testament fathers. But under the New Testament his well beloved Son, who before was indeed in the form of God, as his Proxy, himself became a Prophet, and in the form of a man spake to us immediately as a Prophet.

Heb. iii. 1—3. [Here *Moses's* house, and *Christ's* house, or dispensation, are clearly distinguished.]

But supposing our Lord was the Angel, who appeared and spake under the Old Testament, yet it must be remembered, that he appeared and spake only as an *Angel*, or *Nuncius*, from God. Which character he expressly sustains, *Mal. iii. 1.* — and *ה'אדון* the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even *מלאך הברית* the messenger, Angel, of the covenant, [not the Sinai, but the Gospel covenant,] whom ye delight in.

C H A P. XVI.

Of the GLORY OF THE LORD, as it hath relation to the SHECHINAH, or Divine APPEARANCES.

IT is deserving of our further observation, that the *Shechinah*, or divine appearances, as a token of God's presence, and of his guidance, encouragement, and protection of his people, is often mentioned in the Old Testament under the character of THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH. As in *Exodus xvi. 7, 10. xxiv. 16. Lev. ix. 6, 23. Num. xiv. 10, 21, 22. xvi. 19. xx. 6. Hebrews ix. 5.* — the *Cherubim of the glory*, i. e. the glory of Jehovah; dwelling between the Cherubim, over the Mercy-seat. *St. Peter* alludes to this, *2 Epist. i. 17.* — there came a Voice from the excellent Glory. This token of God's presence is otherwise called his *Presence*, *Exodus xxxiii. 14.* and his *Name*, as that signifieth a mark of distinction or eminence. *Deut. xii. 5. 2 Chron. vii. 16.*

Certainly it was the peculiar honour and advantage of the *Israelites*, that they had such a public visible manifestation of the presence and favour of God; [*Rom. ix. 4. Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the Glory, or the glorious manifestations of God.*] And was well adapted to that dispensation of the church; especially in the early times of its institution under *Moses*, when they could not, by abstract reasoning, be so well acquainted with the nature and perfections of God; and therefore stood in need of some extraordinary visible token, to strike and affect their minds with a sense of his presence, power, authority, favour, and protection.

And as the glory of the Lord appeared publicly in favour of the *Israelites*, to guard and guide them, when they left the land of *Egypt*; so the glory of the Lord is used figuratively to denote, in general, his special blessing, favour, presence, and protection, upon any occasion. *Isaiah lviii. 8.* Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, &c. Then shall thy light, prosperity, break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness [salvation, Saviour] shall go before thee, THE GLORY

OF JEHOVAH *shall be thy reward*, shall advance in thy rear, or behind thee, to guard thee; alluding to the *Shechinah*, as it guarded and guided the children of Israel. *Isaiah lx. 1. Arise, shine; for thy light, happiness, is come, and THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH is risen upon thee.* Thus it is figuratively to denote the divine favour and guardianship.

And in the same manner it is applied to the Christian church, as denoting all the light and blessings, grace, and glory of the Gospel. *Num. xiv. 21. But as truly as I live, all the earth shall be filled with MY GLORY;* speaking of the Gospel, in contradiction to the Jewish peculiarity. *Isa. xxxv. 1, 2. The wilderness of the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose, &c. They shall see THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH, and the excellency of our God.* *Isai. xl. 3, 4, 5. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a high way for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, &c. And THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, [ידן completely, or in its perfection] for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.* *Hab. ii. 14. For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the GLORY OF GOD, as the waters cover the sea.*

All these passages are to be understood of the Gospel manifestations of God's grace, which is his glory. *Exodus xxxiii. 18, 19. And Moses said, I beseech thee, shew me thy Glory. And he said, I will make all my Goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of Jehovah before thee; namely, as in Chap. xxxiv. 6, 7. The Lord—proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God merciful, and gracious, &c. The goodness and mercy of the Lord is the glory of the Lord.*

And observe, how the Apostle, *2 Cor. iii. 13—18.* alludes to the glory of the *Shechinah*, with which *Moses* conversed in the mount; and which impressed such a splendour upon his countenance, as obliged him to cover it with a veil, when he returned to the people; who otherwise could not bear to look upon the excessive brightness of the glory of God, reflected from his, *Moses's*, face. In allusion to this veil, obscuring the brightness of *Moses* his countenance, the Apostle informs us, *ver. 14, 15*, that there was an obscurity, a veil over his writings; which veil, after *Christ* was come, and had taken it away from the Old Testament, the *Jews*, through unbelief, transferred to their own hearts, and so remained ignorant of the true meaning of *Moses* and the prophets. *But, ver. 18. we all [all we Christians, in opposition to the blinded Jews, ver. 13, 14.] we all with open, unveiled, face, having the GLORY of the LORD reflected upon us [from the face of Jesus, Chap. iv. 6.] as from a mirror, are, in the dispositions of our minds, changed into the same image of moral excellency, from glory to glory, or in order to the most complete glory, even as by the spirit of the Lord.* *John i. 14. The word was made flesh, and ἐσκηνοώμεθα dwelt, tabernacled, among us; and we, as well as his first disciples, beheld the glory of Jesus Christ, as of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth.* The Son of God became a man subject to like frailties with us, and lived and conversed freely amongst men; teaching them fully and plainly the great truths relating to God's gracious purposes concerning the redemption and eternal salvation of mankind. And thus God, and his merciful regards to men, his presence in his church, and his power, engaged to keep his servants, and to bring them

them to the possession of eternal life, is more clearly and illustriously manifested in the Gospel, than his favourable presence and protection were by the *Shechinah* in the temple, or in any other place, among the *Israelites*.

We who, under the Gospel dispensation, are so well acquainted with the nature and perfections of God, do not stand in need of any extraordinary visible token of the divine presence. The glorious truths of the Gospel, revealed by *Jesus Christ*, are our *Shechinah*, shining from him upon our minds, and filling them with comfort and joy, in the assured hope of his present care and blessing, and of the possession of glory, honour, and immortality in the future world. And this is to us as a *Shechinah*, infinitely preferable to the visible appearances in the church of old.

C H A P. XVII.

The SCRIPTURE-CHRONOLOGY from the CREATION to the DELUGE.

Gen. 5th Chapter.

WE are now got as far as the Deluge. And here, according to *Moses*, who here begins his genealogies, is the proper place for considering how far we are advanced in the age, or chronology, of the world. For in this chapter he gives the names and ages of the Patriarchs from *Adam* to *Noah*, together with the age of every father, at the time when every son was born. And if we add together the ages of the fathers, when their several sons were born, and the years of *Noah's* life at the time of the Deluge, we shall form chronological tables of the best authority, from the Creation to the Deluge, after this manner.

| Years before the Birth of Christ. | Proofs. | | Table I. | | II. | III. | IV. | V. |
|---|---------|-----|-----------------------------|--------------|----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| | | | | | Born in Yr. of World | Lived in all, Years | Lived with <i>Adam</i> | Lived with <i>Noah</i> |
| 4004 | Gen. v. | 3, | <i>Adam</i> lived | - - 130 | 1 | 930 | Yrs | Yrs. |
| | - - | 6, | <i>Seth</i> lived | - - 105 | 130 | 912 | 800 | |
| | - - | 9, | <i>Enos</i> lived | - - 90 | 235 | 905 | 695 | 84 |
| | - - | 12, | <i>Cainan</i> lived | - - 70 | 325 | 910 | 605 | 179 |
| | - - | 15, | <i>Mahalaleel</i> lived | 65 | 395 | 895 | 535 | 234 |
| | - - | 18, | <i>Jared</i> lived | - - 162 | 460 | 962 | 470 | 366 |
| | - - | 21, | <i>Enoch</i> lived | - - 65 | 622 | 365 | 365 | |
| | - - | 25, | <i>Methuselah</i> lived | 187 | 687 | 969 | 243 | 600 |
| | - - | 28, | <i>Lamech</i> lived | - 182 | 874 | 777 | 56 | 595 |
| 2348 | - vii. | 11, | <i>Noah</i> , at the Deluge | 600 Yrs. old | 1065 | | | |
| In all - - 1656 Years from the Creation to the Flood. | | | | | | | | |

According to Table I. if you add together the years from the creation of *Adam* to the birth of *Methuselah*, you will find that *Adam* was 687 years old when *Methuselah* was born. And, as *Adam* lived in all 930 years, as in Table III. if you subtract 687 from 930, there will remain 243, which is the year of *Methuselah's* life when *Adam* died. Therefore

Methuselah lived 243 years with *Adam*. In the same way of computation you may find how long any of the junior Patriarchs lived with *Adam*, as in Table IV.

If to the year of *Enos's* life, when *Cainan* was born, and to the year of *Lamech's* life, when *Noah* was born, you add all the intermediate years, you will find they are 821, which is the age of *Enos* when *Noah* was born: but *Enos* lived 905 years; from which subtract 821, and the remainder is 84, the number of years in which old *Enos* and young *Noah* were cotemporaries. And in the same way you may find how long any of the senior preceding Patriarchs lived with *Noah*, as in Table V.

So likewise, if you add together the years from the birth of *Methuselah* to the flood, you will find them to be 969; which is just the time that *Methuselah* lived, as in Table III. Hence we may conclude, that *Methuselah* died just before the flood came; and *Noah* being then 600 years old, he had lived just so long with *Methuselah*.

So again, if you add the years from the birth of *Lamech* to the flood, you will find them to be 782 years; and whereas *Lamech* lived but 777 years, it follows, that *Lamech* died five years before the flood came. Therefore, all the Patriarchs, except *Noah*, were dead, when *Noah* entered into the ark.

From the above account it appears, that *Methuselah* lived with *Adam* 243 years, and doubtless conversed with him the greatest part of that time; and so had opportunity abundantly sufficient to receive from *Adam* an account of what he knew concerning the creation, and all the transactions and events contained in the first four chapters of *Genesis*. And as *Noah* lived 600 years with *Methuselah*, he had time sufficient to learn the same account from him, and may well be supposed to have carried it with him entire into the ark. And this may be one reason of the longevity of the antediluvians; which must be resolved into the sole will of God, and can be accounted for no other way. They lived so long, in order to preserve, and hand down to posterity, religious knowledge, in that period of time when it could not be committed to writing; and when it would have been either totally lost, or miserably depraved, had men lived no longer than 70 or 80 years. Besides, their longevity contributed to the more speedy peopling of the world, and to the bringing of necessary arts, in tillage, building and clothing, to a greater perfection.

Ver. 1. *ספר תולדת אדם* *This is the book of the generations of Adam*; that is to say, this is the pedigree, or the genealogy of the descendants of *Adam*. So *Mat. i. 1. The book of the generation, is the genealogy of Jesus Christ*.

Ver. 3. As we know that *Adam* had both *Cain* and *Abel* before *Seth* was born, so both he, and the other Patriarchs, might have several other children before those that are named in this list; it being, probably, the design of *Moses* to set down only those persons by whom the line of *Noah* was drawn from *Seth*, by their true ancestors, whether they were the eldest of the family, or not.

Ver. 21.—and begat *Methuselah*. It is the ingenious conjecture of *Ainsworth*,

Ainsworth, that מַתּוֹשֶׁלַח is a word compounded of מָת he dieth, and שֶׁלַח for וּמִשְׁלַח and an emission; as much as to say, *when he dieth, there shall be an emission, or inundation, of waters.* Thus *Enoch* may be supposed to have predicted the deluge in the name which he gave his son *Methuselah*, with this particular circumstance, that the deluge should happen in the year in which his son should die; as it certainly did. However we have the authority of an Apostle, that *Enoch* was a Prophet, and did foresee, and foretell the deluge to that generation of men. *Jude*, ver. 14, 15. *And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, or of such men as these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his Saints, or with myriads of his holy Angels, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard, unreasonable, contumacious, blasphemous speeches, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.* This, I apprehend, in its primary intention, is a prediction of the deluge, by which God would punish that impious race which then inhabited the earth. But as their destruction by the deluge is made an example of the vengeance which God will execute upon all impenitently wicked at the last day, (2 *Pet.* ii. 5.) so *Enoch's* Prophecy will suit the wicked of all ages, who shall certainly meet with a like reward of their deeds.

Ver. 22. וַיִּתְהַלֵּךְ חֲנוּךְ אֶת-הָאֱלֹהִים *And Enoch walked diligently with, or unto, God, and in a manner agreeable and pleasing to God.* And so did *Noah*, chap. vi. 9. In this construction (with אֶת) וַיִּתְהַלֵּךְ is used but once more, 1 *Sam.* xxv. 15; and there it implies friendship and benevolence on the part of those they conversed with. Therefore the Apostle rightly inserts the idea of *pleasing God* in the account he gives of *Enoch's* translation, *Heb.* xi. 5, 6; and argues well, that *Enoch's* pleasing God, was the effect of his faith in God, and in a future reward. *For without faith it is impossible to please God, or to walk with, or to come unto him, as Enoch did. For he that cometh unto God, must, in the very nature of the thing, believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* [Observe—*pleasing God, coming unto God, and diligently seeking him*, are synonymous, and all included in the sense of *walking with God.*] By faith *Enoch* led a very religious and heavenly life. His thoughts and affections were removed from things below, and fixed upon things above. He had a deep sense of God and his perfections, delighted in his ways, behaved as always in his sight, and constantly studied to please him, and promote his glory. Being of a character so excellent, and withal a person of eminent note, and great industry in opposing the growing wickedness of the world, God was pleased to reward his piety, and give the rest of mankind a demonstration of a future state of glory, the inheritance of the holy and virtuous, by translating him alive, without seeing death, into heaven. It is not improbable, that he was translated in some visible manner as *Elijah* was afterwards, by a glorious appearance of the *Shechinah*, from whence some heavenly ministers might be detached to convey him to a better world. This happened 57 years after *Adam's* death, in the year of the world 987, and 669 years before the deluge.

Ver.

Ver. 29. *And Lamech called his son's name Noah, [rest or refreshment, from נוח to rest, to take repose,] saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work, and toil of our hands, because of the ground, which the Lord hath cursed. Lamech might give his son this name when he found he had an extraordinary genius for agriculture, and was likely, by his useful inventions, to diminish the very great toil which had hitherto attended the tillage of the earth. See chap. ix. 20, 21.*

C H A P. XVIII.

Of the DELUGE.

Gen. Chapters VI. and VII.

GEN. iv. 26.—*then it was begun to call by the name of the Lord.* Or then, in the days of *Enos*, the family of *Seth*, which adhered to God and his worship, began to give themselves a denomination expressive of their relation and regards to God; that is to say, to assume the title of *the Sons*, or *Children of God*, as in chap. vi. 2. in order to distinguish and separate themselves from the irreligious family of *Cain*. Which title was also used after the flood. *Job i. 6. ii. 1.*

But (chap. vi. 1. which is in connexion with chap. iv. 26, the intermediate chapter being a genealogical parenthesis) [*But when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, &c.*] The families of *Seth* and *Cain*, increasing and spreading upon the earth, at length met and unhappily mixed together. For the sons of God, by the instigation of sensual appetite, without regard to reason or religion, joined themselves in affinity to *Cain's* impious posterity, by marrying their beautiful women; the consequence of which was, that they were soon corrupted by the profane conversation of their new relations. The virtuous and godly, in marrying both themselves and children, should be careful to keep within the limits of religion. A wife is the foundation of many other relations, and commonly has a great influence upon a man and his family; but it is a relation we can choose for ourselves: and in a case of so great importance, we should neither follow the lust of covetousness, nor of carnal desires, but the rules of religion, and the fear of God.

Thus, notwithstanding the Divine Manifestations, and the preaching of *Enoch* and *Noah*, and, probably, of other good men, the contagion of wickedness by degrees infected the whole earth, and turned it into a scene

scene of impiety, lewdness, and injustice. The issue of the aforesaid disorderly marriages joined the worst part; and growing up without any sense of religion and virtue, became wholly engaged in sensual ambitious pursuits, and joining, or imitating a lewd and impious race of giants, which were then in the earth, they affected to be men of renown for great and valorous exploits, by all methods of oppression and violence, subjecting all others to their wills and lusts; and every where extinguishing a sense of God, both by their wicked, *ungodly deeds*, and *their hard*, contumacious, blasphemous *speeches* against him, and his holy laws, (*Jude 15.*) despising his goodness, and disdaining the restraints of his government; till *all the earth was corrupt before God, and filled with violence*, ver. 13. *every imagination of the thoughts of their hearts being only evil continually*, ver. 5; which cut off all hopes of their amendment, their minds being wholly intent upon gratifying their ambition and lust.

In relation to the sad condition of the world, the first thing that God declared, probably, from the *Shechinah* in the thin assembly of his worshippers, was this, (ver. 3.) *My Spirit shall not always strive with man*, &c. This is the spirit (1 Pet. iii. 19, 20.) *by which* our Lord *went and preached* [not in person, but by such preachers as *Enoch* and *Noah*, 1 Pet. ii. 5] *unto the spirits* [which are now, i. e. at the time of the Apostle's writing] *in prison* [confined in the state of the dead, and reserved in safe custody to the day of judgment], *which sometimes were disobedient in the days of Noah, while the ark was in preparing*. *My Spirit shall not always strive*, or debate, *with man*, for his reformation, *בשנוח רוח* *בשנוח* eo quod profecto ille caro, *seeing that really he is* [nothing but] *flesh*, altogether fleshly, void of all virtuous principles, and therefore incapable of being reformed by any means proper to be applied to a rational nature. Violence, or coercion, cannot make him good, and he will not attend to any methods of persuasion. But where the reformation of moral agents cannot be effected, it is fit and reasonable that they should be destroyed; for it is to no purpose to continue in being a race of creatures, who live in direct opposition to the perfections of God, and all the wise and good ends of their creation; and who therefore might as well never have been made at all, because rendered utterly incapable of honouring God their Maker, of enjoying themselves, or being useful to others. It must be inconsistent with the Divine Perfections, and all the good and wise ends of his government, to make that life the object of his providential care and liberality, which is thus miserably perverted. On the contrary, such are the nuisance, corruption, disorder, and plague of the creation; and for that reason it is agreeable, not only to justice, but to goodness, and beneficence, that such should be removed out of the creation. Hence it is, that God, speaking *על דברת בני* *על דברת בני* after the manner of men, is said *to repent, and to be grieved, that he had made man on the earth*, and was resolved to destroy them. Ver.

COROLLARY I. Religion and virtue are the soul and support of the universe; which being totally taken away, no reason can be given why any worlds or agents should exist.

COROLLARY II.

COROLLARY II. The holy Scriptures, which assure us the wages of sin is death, and constantly affirm, that the impenitent workers of iniquity shall be destroyed, do give us infallibly a just and true account of things, which demands the whole attention of our minds.

It was determined, because it was fit, that the world so vicious should be destroyed. And the great God might destroy them in what way he should judge most proper, without any injustice on his part, or on the part of any agents which he might employ. He might have destroyed them by fire from heaven, as *Sodom*, &c. or by pestilence, or by destroying angels, *1 Chron. xxi. 12, 27. 2 Chron. xxxii. 21.* Or he might have given a commission to any one more righteous nation among them, had there been any such, to destroy all the rest by the sword, and a right to enter upon all their possessions, as in the case of the wicked *Canaanites*, *Deut. vii. 2. ix. 5. Lev. xviii. 26, &c.* For the property of life, and of all possessions, belongs originally and absolutely to God alone. But he chose to destroy them by a deluge, or general inundation.

Not that the Divine Wisdom intended to extirpate the human race; the design was not to extirpate, but to reform; and therefore the Lord was graciously pleased to respite the judgment, the impious world had deserved, for 120 years, ver. 3. This was to shew that he had no pleasure in their destruction, and to give them space for repentance, that their ruin, if possible, might be prevented. Thus *the long-suffering of God waited for the conversion of the disobedient in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing*, *1 Pet. iii. 20.* Noah was an excellent person, *a just man and perfect*, who, like *Enoch*, walked with God, ver. 9. Him and his family God was pleased graciously to preserve; that from so good a stock the human race might be again propagated, and religion restored in the world. With him God purposed to *establish his covenant*, or grant of blessings, ver. 18. The grace of God to mankind, especially the grand scheme of redemption, was not to fail, or to be suspended; therefore the Lord directed *Noah* to build a vessel in shape like a large chest, every way convenient for floating upon the waters, and for containing all the creatures which it was to receive, ver. 30. * [See *PIERCE* on *Heb. xi. 7.*] *Noah* without delay expressed his humble and entire faith in the Divine Warning; and in obedience to it, applied himself to the building of the ark, for the saving of himself and family, (*Heb. xi. 7.*) *by the which he condemned the unbelieving and impenitent world, and became heir of the righteousness*, [or became intitled to the salvation] *which is by faith.*

Note—*Noah* is commonly, and, I think, justly supposed to have been 120 years in building the ark, for that was the time *the long-suffering of God waited*; which time of long-suffering was, *while the ark was in preparing*, as in *1 Pet. iii. 20.* At the beginning of this time, *Noah's* three sons, *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*, were not born; for *Noah* was now but 480 years old, and none of his foresaid sons were born till he was

500.

| | Cubits. | Feet. | Yards. |
|-------------------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| * The length of the ark | 300 equal to | 450 equal to | 150 at least. |
| The breadth | — 50 | 75 | 25. |
| The height | — 30 | 45 | 15. |

500. chap. v. 32. And therefore that paragraph, ver. 17, &c. wherein mention is made of *Noah's sons, Shem, Ham, and Japhet*, and their wives, must have been spoken after the ark was finished.

When the ark was finished, and *Noah* and his family, the animals and their food, safe lodged in it, about the 6th of November, in the year of the world 1656, by the mighty power of God, *the fountains of the great deeps were broken up*, chap. vii. 11. the sea overflowed, being prodigiously raised by the violent irruption of the subterraneous waters; and rain came down from the sky, not in drops, but in streams and spouts, *the windows of heaven were opened*; and both together easily prevailed over the earth, and put it out of the power of the wisest and strongest of men to relieve either themselves or their friends.

And now, how were the careless and impenitent unbelievers surprised! Conceive them securely going on in the usual way of life, eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, *Mat. xxiv. 37*; feasting and revelling, thinking of nothing but sensual enjoyments, in contempt of every serious admonition: when all on a sudden the most terrible rains and inundations threatened their inevitable destruction. How would they be terrified! How would they condemn their own unbelief, and be forced to own there was a just and righteous God, *who will execute vengeance on all the incurable workers of iniquity*! This is a specimen of the final destruction of the ungodly at the last day, which God hath revealed. Let us not harden our hearts, but believe and prepare.

Chap. vi. 17. *And behold I, even I, by my own immediate operation, do bring המבול a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh.* The word *מבול* in its primary sense, doth not include the idea of a flood; it comes from *נבל* which, with relation to plants and animals, originally signifies, to be so exhausted of natural moisture and spirits, in which their life consists, as to be withered, or dead. And it is applied peculiarly to the deluge, and to nothing but that, under the notion of extinction of life; and so the phrase *המבול מים* may be translated, *an extinction of life by waters*. It is only used in *Gen.* chapters the 6th, 7th, 9th, 10th; and in *Psal. xxix. 10.* *The Lord sitteth [שב] sat, or did sit] upon, or at, the flood, the extinction of life at the deluge.* He then sat upon the seat of judgment, executing vengeance upon that wicked generation; *yea, the Lord sitteth King for ever.* AINSWORTH upon *Psal. xxix. 10.*

This dispensation, as all the rest, had relation to the morals of mankind: and the evident design of it was to lessen the quantity of vice and profaneness, and to preserve and advance religion and virtue in the earth; the great end for which the earth, and man in it, were created. This end it was well adapted to obtain in the then present state of things, and in all future generations. In the present state of things, it prevented a total corruption: for if the whole tainted part had not been cut off, a single family would soon have been drawn in, or destroyed; and then the whole globe must have been ruined, and the schemes and purposes of God, from the beginning of the world, had been defeated. But by reserving a select family for the continuation of the human

human species, the system of the Divine Counsels was preserved entire, and the most proper method was devised for the establishment of religion and virtue in the new world; as the family of *Noah* enjoyed much greater advantages for this end, than the family of *Adam* at the beginning of things.

Noah was not, like *Adam*, a new unexperienced being, ignorant of every thing, but what he received from revelation. *Noah*, besides the benefit of revelation, and intercourse with heaven, had the whole compass of ancient antediluvian knowledge from the creation, in his own possession. He was a man of the most eminent abilities, and the most steady integrity. *Adam* was easily seduced; but in the midst of an universal degeneracy, *Noah* firmly adhered to truth and religion; and when he was warned of God to prepare the ark, even 120 years before the deluge, or any appearances of it, so strong was his faith, or persuasion of the Divine Power, Justice, and Veracity, that he applied himself to the work, and completed it, surrounded as he was with the infidelity and contempt of all the world. A man of so much understanding, and of such a spirit, would not fail to communicate all he knew to his posterity, nor to inculcate it strongly upon their hearts.

But his family, *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*, with their wives, were eye-witnesses of the dreadful inundation, and had the most affecting proof of their own deliverance. They resided full twelve months in the ark, from the beginning of the deluge to the end of it. And it is easy to conceive how they would be affected in such a moving situation. They knew this shocking catastrophe was not an unfortunate accident, but occasioned by the wickedness of the world; therefore all the terrors of the deluge must give them the most sensible perception of the malignant nature of wickedness, that it is infinitely odious to God, and dreadfully pernicious to sinners. They must be convinced of the uncontrollable power and dominion of the Most High, the impossibility of escaping his vengeance, what a fearful thing it is to fall into his hands, and how much they were obliged, both in interest and duty, to reverence and obey him.

On the other hand, their preservation from so terrible a calamity, in the midst of the ruins of all the world besides, must be a very striking demonstration of God's favour and compassion to themselves; which was naturally adapted to make the deepest impressions of gratitude, love, and duty; especially as they could not but be sensible, that such a great and miraculous deliverance was particularly owing to the eminence of piety of their father, *Gen. vii. 1*. Thus they would be well prepared and disposed to acknowledge and admit the excellency of those principles and practices which had been, through Divine Goodness, their security in the general desolation.

And when they left the ark, all the dismal appearances of the desolate world, the ruins of palaces, towns, and cities, the sadly changed face of countries, which they had seen in a cultivated, flourishing state, the bones of men and other animals, strewed over all the face of the earth, would have a natural tendency to fix upon their minds the great impressions they had received in the ark, and render them solicitous to inculcate the principles of religion upon their children. Add to

this, that *Noah*, who lived 349 years after the flood, and whose pious admonitions would be of much greater weight and authority than when he was an unsuccessful preacher of righteousness to the antediluvians, was the instructor, and, for some time at least, the governor of the new world.

From all this it will appear, that this was a very just and proper dispensation for reforming mankind, and restoring religion in the earth; well adapted to that thoughtless age, (when they seem not to have attained to any considerable degree of reasoning, and therefore not disposed to be wrought upon by argument) and to the state of things in it, when no regular civil governments and laws were formed for the administration of justice, and the restraint of injury and wrong; and it appears to have had the intended effect, by suppressing violence and rapine, which never any more universally prevailed in the world; and by fixing a sense of religion upon the minds of men, which afterwards was indeed perverted, but not quite extinguished. And as it stands recorded in sacred writ, it is a warning to the remotest generations. In which view it is referred to, 2 Pet. ii. 5. *And [God] spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; and turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes — making them an example unto those that afterwards should live ungodly.*

C H A P. XIX.

Of NOAH's Sacrifice, and the Divine Intercourse on that Occasion.

Gen. viii. to the End of the 9th Chapter.

NOAH, being restored to the possession of the earth, entered upon it with a solemn act of Divine Worship, according to the original institution, *Gen. viii. 20. He builded an altar unto the Lord, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, i. e. of such beasts and fowls as God hath ordained for Sacrifices, and offered Burnt-Offerings upon the Altar;* which as they were intended to denote, so they were in *Noah* accompanied with, faith in the mercy of God, thankfulness for the late miraculous deliverance, and the dedication of himself, and of all his, to the honour and obedience of God, through the promised Redeemer; of whom *Noah* and the Patriarchs, we may well suppose, had a general knowledge and expectation. The Acceptableness of this act of devotion to God, is signified by his *smelling a sweet savour*, *וַיִּשְׂמֹךְ רִיחַ הַנִּיח* ver. 21. This one may call *Hieroglyphic language*. *Hieroglyphics*, which by bodily sensations, or external representations, denoted abstract

abstract notions, or the sentiments of the mind, were the literature of the first ages of the world. So here, the approbation of the judgment, or what is pleasing to the mind, is signified by an odour or fragrance grateful to the smell. Or the taste and relish of the body is transferred to the taste and relish of the mind. This language is frequently used in the Levitical law; as in *Lev. i. 9, 13, 17. ii. 2, 9. iii. 5, &c.* meaning the acceptableness of the Sacrifice or Offering. So the fragrance of burnt incense represents the acceptableness of sincere prayer, *Psal. cxli. 2. Luke i. 10. Rev. viii. 3, 4.*

It is also applied, in the same sense, to the offering and sacrifice of our Lord, *Ephes. v. 2. And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an Offering and Sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.* God, who is a spirit, can relish, or be pleased with, only that which is morally or spiritually good, the love and obedience of the heart: this is the only savour that is grateful to him. And therefore, the Sacrifice of our Lord must have been an actual exhibition of obedience and love; and the Sacrifices of Noah, and of the Israelites, must have been hieroglyphic representations of, or instructions in, the like moral dispositions, in order to express, or produce them in the hearts of the worshippers. *Smelling a sweet savour* is plainly hieroglyphic or figurative language; and therefore the Sacrifice, or Offering, the object of such smelling, must also be figurative, representing those good dispositions which were, or ought to have been, in the worshipper's heart, and which were in the highest and most perfect degree in our Lord. The Sacrifice of a clean beast or fowl figuratively represented what the worshipper was, or ought to be and do; and our Lord really was, and perfectly did what the Sacrifice represented. Hence *Sacrifice* is applied to beneficent actions, or actions morally good, and pleasing to God, *Psal. iv. 5. l. 14, 23. Phil. iv. 18. Heb. xiii. 15, 16.* And in the *Book of Wisdom* is applied to the whole of a virtuous life, *as gold in the furnace hath he tried them, [afflicted good men,] and received them as a Burnt-Offering.*

The smell, or savour, of a person, or thing, is the quality of it, good or evil, which occasions the approbation or dislike of those that pass a judgment upon it. *Exod. v. 21. You have made ריחנו our savour, that in us which is the object of Pharaoh's judgment, to be abhorred, to stink, in the eyes, the opinion, of Pharaoh.* So *Gen. xxxiv. 30. Jer. xlviii. 11. Moab hath been at ease from his youth, and he hath settled on his lees, —therefore his taste, טעמו his relish remaineth in him, and his scent, ריחו his savour, his bad qualities, is not changed.* 2 *Cor. ii. 14, 15, 16. Now thanks be unto God, who always causeth us to triumph in Christ, and maketh manifest, displays, the savour, ריח טוב the excellent qualities, of his knowledge, the knowledge of Christ, by us in every place. For we are to God, ריח טוב, the sweet-smelling savour of Christ, [i. e. my ministry is to God a Sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour, which I offer unto him on the behalf of Christ. See Rom. xv. 16.] both in regard of them that are saved, and also of them that perish. [For in both cases the counsels and schemes of Divine Wisdom are accomplished.] Though to the one we are, ריח טוב, the savour of death unto death; and to the other we are the savour*

of life unto life. [i. e. to the minds of the one my preaching is offensive; and rejecting it, they are advancing towards eternal death: to the minds of the other it is grateful and pleasing; and embracing it, they are advancing towards life eternal.] *And who is sufficient for these things of so great consequence?* Note—*A saviour of death unto death*, is a saviour which occasions their advancing towards eternal death.

Upon the solemn occasion of *Noab's Sacrifice*, the Lord said in his heart, i. e. determined, or resolved, that he would *not again curse the ground any more for man's sake*; (chap. viii. 21.) for [though] *the imagination of man's heart is [should be] evil from his youth*. From his youth, denotes a corruption of manners of long continuance. See *Isai.* xlvii. 12, 15. *Jer.* iii. 25. *Ezek.* xxiii. 8. See also *Job* xxxi. 18. The Lord was also pleased to repeat to *Noab* and his sons the same blessing upon the propagation of the human species, and the same marks of distinction upon our nature, as he had given *Adam* at his creation, with an additional grant of animal food, (chap. ix. 3, 4) with this restriction, that they should not *eat the flesh of an animal in the life thereof, the blood thereof*; or that they should not eat any flesh cut off from any animal while it is alive. At the same time God made a covenant with *Noab*, and with every living creature, or he made a free and absolute grant or promise to them, that *all flesh should not any more be cut off with the waters of a flood*. Of which more hereafter.

What is here particularly to be observed is, the institution of magistracy, and the punishment of murder. Ver. 6. *Whoso sheds man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed*. Ver. 5. *And surely your blood of your lives will I require, at the hand of every beast will I require it; and at the hand of man, at the hand of every man's brother, will I require the life of man*. The beast that killed, or the man that murdered a man, is here commanded to be put to death *by man*, i. e. by the magistrate or judge. Here courts of judicature are authorized, not only for the punishment of murder, but, by parity of reason, of any other great offences which may effect life nearly as much as murder.

This seems to be the original institution of magistracy, of which we have not hitherto the least intimation in the sacred history. On the contrary, it appears from the case of *Cain*, (*Gen.* iv. 15.) and of *Lamech*, (*Gen.* iv. 23, 24.) that murder, the greatest of crimes, was left to be punished as God in his providence should see fit. And if murder, much more every lesser instance of injury. It seems probable, there were no separate states, nor regular governments, among the antediluvians; but that, as they spread over the face of the earth, they removed further from the place of public worship, lost a sense of God, and lived in a disorderly manner, exercising violence and outrage, as they had power; and were instigated by lust, avarice and revenge, till the earth was filled with violence. Which, I apprehend, could not have been the case, under laws and governors armed with power to restrain outrage and injustice; for though governors themselves, and their creatures, may be tyrannical and oppressive, yet, for their own security, they will not suffer their subjects to break out into anarchy and licentious invasion of life and property, because this is open rebellion against governors. The state of

the old world, probably, was like that of the *Israelites*, when there was *no king*, no magistrate among them, *but every man did that which was right in his own eyes*, Jud. xxi. 25. Which proves the possibility of such a licentious state, and the shocking disorders that would attend it.

The leaving mankind, in the first ages of the world, in this loose and discretionary state, certainly, was not to lead them into wickedness; but I conceive, to teach them by experience the necessity of laws and governors, and the reasonableness of submitting to them. [See Chap. III. § IV. the Corollary.] For even upon the contrary supposition, that magistracy, in some form or other, was instituted from the beginning of the world, yet it is plain, that mankind in those ages would not bear the yoke, but universally shook it off. Nor could government, in fact, be permanently established, till the ruin of the world demonstrated the necessity of it. Therefore, if God did not see fit to establish magistracy from the beginning, it was because he knew mankind would not bear the restraints of government with a rational consent and approbation (without which consent and approbation, at least from the majority, government could not have been either erected or supported), till sad experience had taught them the utility and importance of it. Thus a particular species of injustice, and even of murder, is permitted under our present dispensation, and, instead of being restrained, is established by law; I mean persecution, or the taking away of life for difference of sentiments in religion, which subsists in most Christian countries. And this, I apprehend, the wisdom of God has permitted, that Christians at length may be rationally convinced of the monstrous iniquity of such practice, and so be generally induced by the sense of their own minds to approve and choose goodness, love and mutual forbearance; which we hope will be the genius and happy temper of the next ensuing dispensation. This is the only method of moral improvement, namely, when the mind, by proper methods, is led to apprehend, and freely embrace, what is right and fit; and, I doubt not, takes place in the gradual advances of all, or of any part of mankind in wisdom, as well as of particular single persons. This, with what hath been said before, is the best account I can give of this antediluvian dispensation.

N. B. The curse upon *Canaan*, ver. 25. is to be understood as affecting only the temporal circumstances of his posterity, *a servant of servants shall be he*. As in Deut. xxviii. 16, 17, &c. *Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store*. Nor is it to be considered in *Noah* as a malevolent wish, or imprecation, but simply as a prediction of the future state of *Ham's* posterity; as appears from the whole of *Noah's* discourse, which is plainly prophetic.

C H A P. XX.

Of the DISPERSION at the Tower of BABEL.

Gen. x.

HERE *Moses* gives an account how the earth was peopled by the several families, or descendents of *Noah's* three sons, *Shem*, *Ham*, and *Japhet*, ver. 32. For the particulars of this curious account consult the Commentators, especially Bp. PATRICK. What I would observe is this — That, after the account of the several nations descended from each of *Noah's* sons, it is added, as in ver. 5. *By these descendents of Japhet, were the isles, or transmarine countries, of the Gentiles divided in their several lands; every one after his tongue, or language, after their families, in their nations.* The same is said ver. 20, 31. of the posterity of *Ham* and *Shem*. Which plainly signifies, that they did not all speak the same language; but that the descendents from *Noah's* sons, at least in general, if not several of the particular nations, had a language peculiar to themselves, distinct from the rest, and unintelligible to them. *Noah* and his posterity, while they lived together after the flood, which must be for some considerable time, could have but one and the same language amongst them. How they came to have different languages, and how they were separated into several distant countries, by a very memorable event, *Moses* relates in the next chapter.

When *Noah's* family was numerous enough, probably the Lord, by the mouth of *Noah*, commanded them to separate into different countries, particularly specified, that the earth might be better cultivated and governed. Certainly their division and removal into distant countries (*Gen.* x. 5.) must have been a general public act. And, as *Moses* saith, the earth was divided into nations in *Peleg's* days, (*ver.* 25, 32.) it seems to imply, that it was done by a divine command, and not accidentally, as any might choose a more convenient situation. Which is more clearly expressed, *Deut.* xxxii. 8. where it is said, *when the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam*, [referring to this division of the earth] *he set the bounds of the people, the adjacent nations, according to the number of the future children of Israel*, leaving for them a convenient situation, and room sufficient. In prosecution of this design, the whole earth, except perhaps the eldest Patriarchs, and their attendants, journeying from the mother-colony towards the west, and finding a spacious fruitful vale in the land of *Shinar*, there they determined to settle, and build a city and a tower, reaching up to heaven, or of a very great height. *Deut.* i. 28. ix. 1. *Psal.* cvii. 25, 26. [An hyperbole.]

Their intention was to make themselves a name, and to prevent their being scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth, (*ver.* 4.) as God had probably ordered they should. The scheme was to keep together, and

very likely under one one head. *Schultens*, upon *Job* i. 1. derives *שם* a name, from the Arabic verb *שמ* or *שמא* to be high, elevated, eminent. And according to him, the primary and proper notion of *שם* is a mark or sign, standing out, rising up, or exposed to open view; a standing mark or title of distinction and eminence. 2 *Sam.* vii. 23.—and to make him a name, a monument of honour and eminence, chap. viii. 13. 1 *Kin.* v. 3, 5.—build an house unto, or for, the name, honour, eminent distinction of the Lord, to denote that he is the only true God; and King of the *Israelites*. 1 *Kings* viii. 16, 29. 1 *Chron.* xvii. 21.—to make thee a name, a monument, of greatness and terribleness. *Isai.* xviii. 7. lv. 13.—it shall be to the Lord for a name, i. e. for an everlasting sign, that shall not be cut off. chap. lxiii. 12, 14. So in this place, *Gen.* xi. 4.—and let us, say the heads or leaders, make us a name, a monument or token of superiority and eminence, I conceive to signify to all succeeding generations, that they were the true original governors, to whom all mankind ought to be in subjection; lest other leaders starting up should carry off parties, and so break the body, and set up separate governments. It seems to have been a piece of state-policy, to keep all mankind together, under the present chiefs and their successors. And the lofty Tower was probably intended to command every part of the town, and keep off any body of men, that should attempt to break in upon them.

But God, whose wisdom perfectly foresaw the mischievous effects of such an attempt, determined to frustrate and defeat it. By this scheme a great part of the earth must for a long time have been uninhabited, uncultivated, and overrun with beggary and wild beasts; which, as it was, for a long time, according to ancient authors, exercised the industry and valour of the primitive heroes in hunting and subduing them. It was thus *Nimrod*, that mighty hunter, gained his renown. *Gen.* x. 9. He was a mighty hunter before the Lord. Which is an Hebrew phrase, to signify the greatest, and most eminent thing of any kind. *Acts* vii. 20. *Ἀριστος τοῦ ἔθους*, exceeding fair; 2 *Cor.* viii. 1. *Τὰς χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ*, the very great liberality bestowed by the churches of Macedonia. chap. x. 4. *Δυνατα τοῦ θεοῦ*, exceeding powerful. *Psalms* lxxx. 10, 11. *אל ארזי* the cedars of God, the goodly cedars.

Most probably the bad effects which this project would have had upon the minds, the morals, and religion of mankind, was the chief reason why God interposed to crush it as soon as it was formed. It manifestly had a direct tendency to tyranny, oppression, and slavery. Whereas, in forming several independent governments by a small body of men, the ends of government, and the security of liberty and property, would be much better attended to, and more firmly established; which, in fact, was generally the case, if we may judge of the rest, by the constitution of one of the most eminent, the kingdom of *Egypt*. *Gen.* xlvii. 15—27. The *Egyptians* were masters of their persons and properties, till they sold them to *Pharaoh* for bread: and then their servitude amounted to no more than the fifth part of the produce of the country, as an annual tax payable to the king; which is not near so much as we, with all our English liberties, pay yearly to the church and government.

Corruption may creep into religion under any constitution; but tyranny and despotic power is the readiest and surest way to deprive men of the use of understanding and conscience; and vice and idolatry would

have

have spread much faster, had the whole world, in one body, been under the absolute dominion of vicious, insolent, idolatrous monarchs. This would have been a state of things just in the opposite extreme to the antediluvian licentiousness, and would have been nearly as pernicious to virtue; as it must have sunk mankind into the basest servility of mind, and have stocked the earth with a mean-spirited race of mortals, who durst not open their own eyes, make any generous use of their own faculties, or relish the bounty of heaven with pleasure and thankfulness. *ἥμιν γὰρ ὁ ἀέθρις ἀποαινύται δούλοις ἡμᾶς*, saith Homer (*Odysl. p. ver. 322.*)—*Whatever day makes a man a slave, takes half his worth away.* “Thus I have heard, saith Longinus, Sect. XLIV. if what I have heard in this case deserve credit, that the cases in which dwarfs are kept, not only prevent the future growth of those who are enclosed in them, but also diminish what bulk they already have, by too close constriction of their parts. So slavery, be it never so easy, yet is slavery still; and may deservedly be called, the prison of the soul, and the public dungeon.”

For these wise and beneficent reasons, I presume, the Divine Providence interposed, and baffled the project; which, in the then circumstances of the projectors, would otherwise have been unhappily successful, by confounding and altering their language in such manner, as that they could not understand one another; and so were obliged to desist from the work they had begun, to separate into many smaller bodies, and to seek for settlements at a distance from each other, as the several companies, by the sameness of speech, were capable of conversing together, and possibly in the very countries which God had marked out for them.

Thus the contagion of wickedness, for some time at least, had bounds set to it; evil example was confined, and could not stretch its influence beyond the limits of one country; nor could wicked projects be carried on with universal concurrence by many little colonies, separated by the natural boundaries of mountains, rivers, deserts, seas, and hindered from associating together by a variety of languages unintelligible to each other. And further, in this dispersed state, they would, whenever God pleased, be made checks reciprocally upon each other by invasions and wars; which would weaken the power, and humble the pride of corrupt and vicious communities. This dispensation, therefore, was properly calculated to prevent a second universal degeneracy. God therein dealing with men as rational agents, and suiting his scheme to their present state and circumstances. This Dispersion probably happened about 240 years of the flood.

C H A P. XXI.

Of the **רַב** COUNCIL of GOD; or, a Criticism upon those Words,
Let us go down, Gen. xi. 7.

ALL allow, that the Lord's coming down to see the City and Tower, Gen. xi. 5, is to be understood *anagogically* by way of accommodation to our conceptions; and means no more, but that by the effects, he made it appear, that he observed their motions, and knew their intentions. This is a very common, and in our present embodied state, a very proper way of representing the actions of Deity. But when *Jehovah* is represented as saying, Go to, let us go down, verse 7, as before, chap. i. 26, he had said, *Let us make man*, &c. learned men have supposed, that this is to be taken literally, and that God here spake to some beings included in his own nature and substance. Whereas this also is a figure of speech, which is to be understood as the foregoing. Kings transact their most important affairs in a solemn council. Hence, God is pleased to represent himself as having likewise his **רַב** or privy council. And the determinations of his Providence are described, after the manner of men, as having been made in that Council, in order to express the wisdom, importance, and certainty of them. Thus, and for this purpose, *Jehovah* is here, and in Gen. i. 26, represented as speaking in his Council, *Let us make man, let us go down, and there confound their language*.

Of this Council, I apprehend, *Job* speaks, chap. xxix. 4. — when the secret Council **בְּסוּד** of God was upon my tabernacle; when the august Assembly, where God's Counsels and Decrees are passed, was held, as it were over my habitation; and it seemed to be his peculiar care to prosper me and my family. To this Council the Prophets in vision are supposed to be admitted as standers-by, and hearers of what is there decreed, and resolved upon. *Job* xv. 8, **הֲבָשְׁתָּהּ בְּסוּד ה' הִשְׁמַעְתָּהּ** *hast thou heard, or been a hearer, in the secret Council of God.* Jer. xxiii. 17, 18. They, the false prophets, say *unto them that despise me, the Lord hath said, Ye shall have peace; and they say unto every one that walketh after the imagination of his own heart, No evil shall come unto you.* **כִּי מִי עֹמֵד בְּסוּד יְהוָה** *For who hath stood [as a waiter, or servant, ready to carry God's messages to his people. So עֹמֵד מִלִּפְנֵי מֶלֶךְ one that stands before the King, is properly the King's Minister. And when *Elisha* saith (2 Kings, iii. 14.), as the Lord liveth, before whom I stand, he means, whose Minister I am.] in the secret Council, or Assembly, of *Jehovah*, and hath seen and heard his word? q. d. Which of you hath been wrapt in vision, and admitted as a stander-by and hearer in that great Assembly, where God's Councils are held, and hath brought a message to his people from thence? No, you*

go presumptuously with messages of your own heads. Verse 21. *I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied.* *אני עמדו בסודי* But if they had stood in my Council, and had caused my people to hear my words, then they should have turned them from their evil way, and from the evil of their doings. This connexion of the Prophets with the Council of God, may serve to explain *Jonah's* fleeing from the presence of, or from before, the Lord, *Jon. i. 2.* He was sent upon a frightful and dangerous message; but as he judged, I suppose, that the Council of God was held in no other land but that of *Israel*, he hoped to break off his connexion with it, by removing to a remote country among the Gentiles.

The vision of *Micaiah* (1 Kings xxii. 19—24.) will set this affair in the strongest light. And he said, *Hear thou the word of the Lord: I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him, on his right hand and on his left. And the Lord said, Who shall persuade Ahab, that he may go up, and fall at Ramoth Gilead? And one said on this manner, and another on that manner. And there came forth a spirit, and stood before the Lord, and said, I will persuade him. And the Lord said unto him, Wherewith? And he said, I will go forth, and I will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets. And he said, Thou shalt persuade him, and prevail also: go forth and do so.* Here the Lord is shewn in Council, after the manner of men, deliberating upon this affair. Now, whether there was any such real consultation is not necessary for us to inquire. Thus it was represented in all its circumstances to the prophet, and stamp'd upon his mind in vision; and it was God who directed him to use it in this form, as appears plainly from the solemn introduction, *Hear thou therefore the word of the Lord.* And though it should only be a parabolical vision, yet the drift and substance of it was a divine infallible truth, namely, that *Ahab's* prophet prophesied lies; and this by the Divine Permission, and the instigation of the wicked spirit, who was a liar from the beginning, and the father of lies.

A passage similar to this, is that in the book of *Job*, chap. i. 6. *Now there was a day when the Sons of God, Angels, came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them. And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, &c.* And again, chap. ii. 1, &c. Here we see is the same grand assembly in the case of *Job*, as in the foregoing instance of *Ahab*. The same host of heaven, called here the *Sons of God*, presenting themselves before *Jehovah*, as in the vision of *Micaiah* they are said to stand on his right hand and on his left. A wicked spirit appears among them, here called *Satan*, an adversary, and there a *lying spirit*; both of them bent on mischief, and ready to do hurt, as far as God should give them leave. And the meaning in both cases is the same, that God in his wise providence permitted *Satan* to afflict *Job*, and the lying spirit to deceive *Ahab*. Only *Micaiah* delivers his representation as a Prophet, in the exercise of his office, and as he received it, that is to say, in a vision; *I saw the Lord sitting on his throne, &c.* The other [probably *Job* himself, who was not unacquainted with the Council of God, as we have seen], as an historian, interweaves it with the history in the plain, narrative style, *There was a day, &c.* The things delivered

delivered to us by both these sacred writers, are in substance the same, equally high, and above the reach of mere human sight and knowledge. Note—the representations of this kind are founded in the doctrine of Angels, good and bad, especially the former, as the instruments of Providence. A point revealed, no doubt, from the beginning, and well understood in the earliest ages; witness *Jacob's ladder, with the Angels of God ascending and descending upon it.* Gen. xxviii. 12.

Isaiah also in a vision stood in the Council of God, chap. vi. 1, &c. *Where he saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the Seraphim, the angelic host, &c.* The matter in consultation was, verse 7. *Whom shall I send, and who will go upon the prophetic errand for us, using deliberative language, and the plural number, as in the two texts under consideration, Let us make man—Let us go down.—* Isaiah readily offered his service, verse 8. And the Lord delivered to him his commission and message, verse 9. And he said, *Go and tell this people, &c.*

Ezekiel in the same manner in vision stood in the Council of the Lord, chap. i. 1. *The heavens were (i.e. the temple was) opened, and I saw visions of God; namely, the four living creatures, or Cherubims, representing the church of God attending upon the glory of the Lord, or the Shechinah, verse 28, and seated upon a throne, verse 26. And he said unto Ezekiel, chap. ii. 3. Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, &c.*

Zechariah, too, chap. i. 7, 8, &c. to the end of the sixth chapter, is represented as conversing with the Lord in his Council, and with an Angel; though the scene is not described so distinctly as in the other places.

John also in the spirit, i.e. in a vision, Rev. i. 10, was present in the same Council of God, described in the 4th and 5th chapters of the Revelation, chap. iv. 1. *A door was opened in heaven, in the temple; John was invited to attend, a throne was set in heaven, with a majestic Personage upon it, attended by the Cherubim, or the Church, and the Angelic Host. The matter, which was there very solemnly transacted, was the future state of the Church, to the end of the world.*

This is the prophetic way of telling us how a thing was done, which really was done, but in a way to us invisible. Thus things of the greatest importance were represented in the strongest images to the mind of the Prophet; and in this way Infinite Wisdom would have them described and represented to us. Nor should we quarrel with our Maker for creating us with such faculties as are most affected and impressed with truths that are conveyed in this manner; for those truths make the deepest impression which first enter like a picture into the imagination, and from thence are stamped upon the memory.

Note—Homer, previously to Events, represents the consultations of his fictitious deities in the same narrative way, to denote, that all things are subject to an over-ruling Providence. A method practised long before him, and very probably derived from the truly-inspired.

I shall only further observe, (1.) That *he* is sometimes applied to worshipping assemblies, *Psal. lxxxix. 7. exi. 1.* (2.) Sometimes it signifies the thing that is transacted, commanded, or established in the

Council

Council of God. *Psal. xxv. 14. Prov. iii. 32.* So it may be understood, *Amos iii. 7. The Lord God will do nothing, but he revealeth his secret Council unto his servants the Prophets.*

C H A P. XXII.

Of the PATRIARCHAL RELIGION.

WE should now advance to the next Divine Dispensation, the calling of *Abraham*; but, before we proceed, it may be of use to gain the clearest notions we are able of the state of Religion among the nations after the deluge.

About 425 years after the deluge, and 185 after the dispersion, the Lord said unto *Abraham*, (*Gen. xii. 1.*) *Get thee out of thy country, which was Ur of the Chaldees, (Gen. xi. 28.) and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee.* Compare this with *Josh. xxiv. 2. Joshua said unto all the people, thus saith the Lord God of Israel, your fathers dwell on the other side of the flood [in Mesopotamia, beyond the river Euphrates], in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor; and they served other Gods; that is to say, they were idolaters.* Some learned men suppose, that in the days of *Reu*, i. e. some time before the year 370, after the deluge, the *Egyptians* and *Babylonians* began to introduce idolatrous principles and practices; which, from the fore-quoted place in *Joshua*, it is certain, crept into the family of *Shem*; some, and some of the principal of his posterity, growing vain in their imaginations, and worshipping the heavenly bodies, with a divine, or however with an undue honour. For this species of idolatry seems to have been the most ancient, as this, and no other, is mentioned in the book of *Job. Chap. xxxi. 26, 27, 28. If I have beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand:—this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge, for I should have denied the God that is above.*

The worship of the heavenly bodies is supposed to have prevailed among the nations in the days of *Moses*, *Deut. iv. 19. xvii. 3.* and was continued long after, *2 Kings xxi. 3, 5. xxiii. 4. Jer. xlv. 17, 19.* The splendour and great utility of the heavenly bodies would naturally strike the minds of mankind; and there would not then, any more than at any other time, be wanting artful men, who for their own advantage, and the honour of superior wisdom, would supply arguments for this idolatry, as the most effectual mean of securing all the enjoyments of life, and inculcate them strongly upon the minds of the weak and credulous, who have always been the most numerous part of mankind. *Maimonides*, the learned Jew, (as quoted by *Ainsworth* upon *Gen. iv. 26.*) supposes the advocates of this corrupt worship argued after this manner. They

“ They said — For as much as God hath created these heavenly bodies
 “ to govern the world, and set them on high, and imparted honour unto
 “ them, and they are Ministers that minister before him, it is meet that
 “ men should praise, and glorify, and give them honour. For this is the
 “ will of God, that we magnify and honour whomsoever he magnifieth
 “ and honoureth; even as a king would have them honoured, that stand
 “ before him; and this is honouring the king himself. When this thing
 “ was come up into their hearts, they began to build temples to hea-
 “ venly bodies, and to praise and glorify them with words, and to wor-
 “ ship before them, that they might, in their misguided opinion, obtain
 “ favour of the Creator.” Thus you see, the first corrupters of Reli-
 gion had principles and reasons; and perhaps as good as those who
 have in like manner corrupted Christianity, by introducing idolatry
 into it.

This corruption was not at first universal, it spread gradually. And
 therefore, though in *Abraham's* days it had made a considerable progress,
 yet even then, and for some time after, we meet with some eminent per-
 sons, who were not of *Abraham's* family, that retained a just sense of God,
 and the purity of his worship. For instance, *Melchizedek*, king of *Salem*,
Gen. xiv. 18. who was (*Heb. vii. 3.*) *without father, without mother,*
without descent, without beginning of days, nor end of life, recorded in the history of the Patriarchs from
Noah to *Abraham*. For (*ver. 6.*) *his descent, or genealogy, was not counted*
from them, in the Abrahamic line; but for all that, he was a person of
 great eminence in religion. *Gen. xiv. 18, &c.* “ For he was a wor-
 “ shipper of the true God, and a person of the most exemplary justice,
 “ and sincere piety, remaining absolutely untainted, amidst the general
 “ corruption of the country in which he lived; and who, for the better
 “ promoting of true Religion, was himself a priest, as well as a king, and
 “ performed the sacred offices of it among his own people. This great
 “ man came forth to meet, and to congratulate *Abraham*, and provided
 “ him a princely entertainment for himself and his men, for their refresh-
 “ ment, after they had engaged with, and defeated five kings. And
 “ then, as priest, in which capacity he was superior to *Abraham*, (*Heb.*
 “ *vii. 7.*) he solemnly gave *Abraham* his blessing, or wish of happiness;
 “ putting up his hearty prayers to the great Creator and Governor of
 “ the world, to confirm the blessing he had pronounced upon him; as
 “ also his humble praises and thanksgivings for the remarkable mercies
 “ of his late victory. And *Abraham*, on the other side, paid his ac-
 “ knowledgment to the Almighty, by presenting the tenth of what he
 “ had taken in the battle to *Melchizedek* his priest, by whom he had
 “ been so devoutly blessed.” *PYLE.*

NOTE — *Melchizedek's* priesthood, as it was prior to that of the
 Jewish priests, so it was of a distinct and superior order, as the Apostle
 argues, *Heb. vii.* For long after the institution of the Jewish priesthood,
 the Lord with an oath declares, that the *Messiah* should be a priest for-
 ever, after the order [in the Hebrew *דְּרַתִּי* *secundum ritum*, accord-
 ing to the affair, the case; which, as it relateth to a kind or sort of
 priesthood, is well translated *de ratione*] of *Melchizedek*, *Psal. cx. 4.*

What order was *Melchizedeck*? The Apostle directs us to understand his names appellatively, or as denoting a character of moral excellence; *King of Righteousness*, or a righteous king; and *King of Peace*, or blessing or happiness, as he wished well to others, and endeavoured to make them happy, (*Heb. vii. 2.*) which is the highest character of worth and excellence any moral agent can sustain. Thus he was the *Priest*, officiated in the service of the most High God. And thus the object of his priesthood, and consequently his priesthood itself, was of an eternal, unchangeable, and universal nature, even righteousness and goodness, not limited to time or family; for the Scripture gives no account of his birth, death, or genealogy. We read of no predecessor or successor in his office, as in the Jewish priests. [Note—this argument is adapted (*ad hominem*) to the Jews, who in this way, or by descent from *Aaron* and *Levi*, judged of the validity of their priests.] But being of an universal, unchangeable nature, must subsist as long as there are any moral agents, that live in obedience to God.

Thus our Lord was made priest after the order of *Melchizedeck*, i. e. after the law of a carnal positive commandment, which confined the office to a fleshly, mortal descent, and employed in certain external rites and ceremonies; but according to that real Power which is productive of souls, or eternal life, namely, true holiness. For, verse 17, God declared, *Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of the King of Righteousness*: and chap. i. 8. 9. *Unto the Son he saith—Thy throne, O God, is everlasting! A sceptre of rectitude is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee king and priest, with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And still nearer to the case, chap. v. 8. Though he were a son, in the highest sense, before he came into the world, yet was he disciplined in obedience, as if he had been a learner, by the things which he suffered. Verse 9. And being made perfect, having exhibited a perfect character of all moral excellence, became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him. And it was on this account, ver. 10, that he was called and constituted of God a high priest after the order of the King of Righteousness. For, as the Apostle concludes his dissertation upon this very subject, (*Heb. vii. 26.*) *such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens, or the Angels, in order to raise us to their happiness.**

Melchizedeck was eminently religious. And probably *Abraham's* neighbours and confederates, *Mamre*, *Escol*, and *Amer*, *Gen. xiv. 13.* were good and pious; for, though they were *Amorites*, it was about 100 years after this, before the sins of that nation were full. The book of *Job* gives the clearest and most extensive view of the Patriarchal Religion. The reality of his person, the eminence of his character, his fortitude and patience in very great afflictions, his preceding and subsequent felicity, are allowed by all; and it is generally supposed that he lived a generation or two before *Moses*; and probably, the book was wrote by himself, in time of his restored prosperity. Some learned men indeed, as *Gratius*, *Codurcus*, *Le Clerc*, and others, pretend that this noble performance was written about a thousand years after the time in which *Job* lived; namely, in or near the time of the

Babylonish

Babylonish captivity; alledging, "that frequent Chaldaisms, as the plural *π* for *Ε* are to be found in it; that some passages are taken from the *Psalms*, *Proverbs*, and *Ecclesiastes*; that there are more than a hundred words, partly *Syriac*, partly *Arabic*, which are not to be found in the other parts of Scripture; which are all signs that the author lived in the later times, when many words, borrowed from the idioms of the neighbouring nations, were admitted into the Hebrew.

It is one mark of the simplicity of very ancient times, that in the inventory of *Job's* estate, no mention is made of money, but only of oxen, sheep, camels, asses, servants. And *Grotius* himself owns, "That there is no mention in the book of *Job* of any law, or religious rites, but such as were traditional, [chap. viii. 8, 9, 10. xv. 18, 19. xxii. 15, 16.] nor of any points of history, nor of any idolatrous practices, but such as were of the more ancient times, before the Mosaic institution. [Chap. xx. 4, 5, meaning *Adam*. xxii. 15, 16.] And that the length of *Job's* life, extended to about 200 years, agrees also with the same times; that the country where it happened was *Arabia*, as appears, not only from the names of places, *Uz*, *Teman*, *Shubah*, but from the many *Arabic* words here used." And might not *Grotius* from hence, have fairly and strongly concluded, that the writer was an *Arabian*? No. He saith, "it was written by some Hebrew." Why so? Because *Arabia*, *Job's* country, is called *the East*. Chap. i. 3. And it was usual with the Hebrews to call *Arabia* the East, as he has shewn upon *Mat. ii. 1*. But the Arabian *Magi* themselves, in the next verse, call their own country *Arabia*, the East; and so might *Job*, or any other Arabian in *Job's* time. The East-country was the common name of *Arabia*, as the West-country is the general name of one part of *England*. Many words used in this book, are not to be found in other parts of Scripture. The reason is, because it is so ancient, that some words therein are grown obsolete, and their true meaning is hard to be recovered. It is therefore the most difficult, because it is the most ancient book in the sacred code. Had it been wrote in later times, the language would have been more intelligible.

It is no argument, that the author of this book took similar or same expressions from *David's* or *Solomon's* writings, [compare *Psalms* cvii. 40. with *Job* xii. 21, 24.] because it is more probable that *David* and *Solomon* borrowed such expressions from the book of *Job*. [Compare *Job* xxxix. 33. *Mat. xxiv. 28*.] *Schultens*, a very good judge, affirms, that the style of the book hath all the marks of a most venerable and remote antiquity; and that the Chaldaisms, as some call them, particularly the plurals in *π*, are true Hebrew and Arabic, and that of the most ancient stamp. *Job* is honourably mentioned with *Noah* and *Daniel*, *Ezek. xiv. 12—20*. Hence it follows, (1.) That *Job* is no fictitious character, but a real person, as truly as *Noah* and *Daniel*. (2.) That he was, as well as they, a person of distinguished piety. (3.) That he was well known and celebrated as such amongst the *Jews*, to whom *Ezekiel's* prophecy was directed. (4.) That he must either have been of the seed of *Israel*, or, like *Noah*, of the Patriarchal times; otherwise the *Jews*, separated from, and raised in spiritual privileges above all other nations,

would never have proposed to themselves one of their Gentile, uncircumcised neighbours, of whom they had a mean opinion, as an example of the greatest piety, nor have admitted his story into their Canon. If he was of the Patriarchal times (for an Israelite he could not be) he must have been at the distance of about a thousand years before *Ezekiel*. Merely oral tradition of such a person could not have subsisted through so long a space of time, without appearing, at last, as uncertain or fabulous. There must, therefore, have been some history of *Job* in *Ezekiel's* time; no other history but that which we now have, and which has always had a place in the Hebrew code, was ever heard of, or pretended. Therefore this must be the history of *Job* in *Ezekiel's* time; and which must have been generally known, and read as true and authentic, and, consequently, must have been wrote near to the age in which the fact was transacted, and not in after-times, when its credibility would have been greatly diminished.

In short, should I aver, that this is the oldest and noblest book in the world, I should have the vote of all the best critics; and the very frame and cast of the book itself would justify the assertion.

C H A P. XXIII.

Of Job's Case and Character.

THE Book of *Job* is the History of a real sufferer, *Job*; and the Substance of a real conversation with his friends, about his sufferings, in a poetic dress. *Job* was a prince of the greatest eminence, wealth, and authority, among the people of the east; whose piety and integrity equalled his temporal grandeur, chap. i. 1, 2, 3; of the strictest religion and virtue; the patron of the injured poor and fatherless; the scourge of injustice and oppression; highly honoured and esteemed by the good, revered and dreaded by the vicious and profane; chapters xxix. and xxxi. This man, so good, and so glorious, was, by the Divine Permission, and malice of the Devil, at once reduced to the most indigent and deplorable circumstances, stript of all his substance, bereaved of all his children, seven sons and three daughters, and, soon after, seized with a most noisome and painful disease, from head to foot; which rendered him the most shocking spectacle of sorrow and wretchedness. The country, so far as the fame of his grandeur and religion had spread, would be full of his story, and of astonishment. The religious would be inclined to conclude, that such signal and sudden calamities could be no other than the judgments of God upon a man who, under the mask of religion, had concealed a wicked and profligate life. The wicked and profane would triumph in his sufferings, as a justification of their own bad principles and practices, and as a demonstration of

of the insignificance of the strictest regards to God and his worship. Chap. xvi. 9, 10, 11. xvii. 6. His relations and acquaintance, struck with horror and aversion to such a despicable, vile, abandoned creature, would not own him. His wife and family treated him with unkindness and neglect, chap. xix. 13—19. The basest of men broke in upon him like a legion of fiends, made his afflictions their merriment, treated him with all manner of indignities, calumnies, and slander; and even spared not to spit in his face; chap. xxx. 1—15. Scarce ever were the feelings of the human heart oppressed with such a complicated load of grief; scarce ever was a profession of religion so much exposed to censure, reproach, and insult.

And how did the good man bear all this? With heroic bravery; that is to say, with a patience as steady and uniform as human infirmity will admit. [*Patience is sincere adherence to God and duty, under all difficulties and discouragements; and the ground of patience is faith, or a full persuasion of the power, goodness, and wisdom of God.*] When his calamities, the loss of his numerous herds, flocks, and servants, and of his dearest children, partly by the hands of violence, partly by lightning and storm; when these calamities rushed upon him like an inundation, though he felt all the pangs of the most grievous affliction, and used such expressions of his doleful case, as were customary at that time; [Chap. i. 20. *rent his mantle, shaved his head, fell down upon the ground.* Chap. ii. 8, 12. *Sprinkled dust upon their heads.* See 1 Sam. iv. 12. 2 Sam. xlii. 19. Job. vii. 6. Ezek. xxvii. 30. Iliad xviii. 22.] yet he behaved like a wise and good man, prostrating himself upon the ground in a humble sense of his own unworthiness, and a patient submission to the Will of God, composing his mind into a calm and quiet adoration of his supreme Dominion and unblemished Justice, chap. i. 20, 21. "I came," saith he, "by the Divine Will into the world, a naked helpless creature; and by the same will I must shortly return to the dust. I am bereaved of my most valuable and dearest temporal enjoyments, but by the permission of a wise and righteous God. His own he gave; his own, for wise ends, he hath taken away. I acquiesce in his Sovereign Disposal, and adore the incontestable purity and righteousness of his dealings with me." O brave Soul! O happy Man, who could keep up good thoughts of God, and communion with him, under the sharpest strokes of his rod!

When, covered over with painful boils, in the place and posture of a humble penitent, he was probably pouring out his submissions and supplications to Heaven, his wife spared not to reproach him with his preposterous godliness. Chap. ii. 9, 10. *Dost thou still retain thine integrity, blessing God, and dying?* q. d. "Will you bless God when he is destroying you? Will you call upon him, and believe he is good, when he hath ruined your estate and family, and, in spite of all your humble submissions, is slaughtering your body, and within a stroke of your life?" But Job returned no other than a mild answer, as became a good man, and affectionate husband. "You speak not like yourself," said he, "but as a woman void of understanding. Is it fit God should always smile upon sinful creatures? Shall we say, he is not just when he brings us into afflictions? We receive what pleaseth us with joy," and

“and it is but reasonable that we receive what is ungrateful with a calm resignation; seeing both come from the same Wise and Sovereign Disposer of all things.” Still Job is patient, and, under every trial, adheres to God and duty.

The composure and steadiness of his mind was more severely tried by his three friends, *Eliphaz*, *Bildad*, and *Zophar*, men of the same rank, and of like good sense and piety, who dwelt in some of the adjacent provinces, and in whose familiarity he had probably been long happy. The report of his sufferings, of the ruin of his character, and the wound thereby given to religion, having reached their ears, they agreed, with a sincere intention, to join their endeavours in administering the only advice and consolation they apprehended his case would admit. For, as the suspicions were very strong, and his calamities carried evident marks of Divine inflictions, they had the same opinion of them with the rest of the world, and believed they were the just judgments of God upon a hypocrite; and therefore were determined, by all means, to fix a sense of guilt upon his conscience, in order to bring him to true repentance, and so to a solid interest in the Divine Favour and blessing. But when they were come, and had found their late flourishing, honourable, and highly-esteemed friend, reduced to the most loathsome and miserable wretch, that was sitting in the ashes, they were astonished beyond expression; and being confirmed in their evil suspicions, though they sat with him on the ground, yet, as their bad opinion of him would not allow them to say any thing comfortable and encouraging, they chose to say nothing at all for seven or several days together, *chap. ii. 12*. The sight of his old acquaintance, and their unfavourable manner of condolence, raised his passion of sorrow to such a pitch, that it burst out into a torrent of the most bitter reflections upon his birth-day; wishing it were struck out of the number of days, or rendered as odious and detestable to all others, as it was to himself.

Upon this, *Eliphaz*, probably the oldest and most honourable of the three, addressed himself to Job, and, in the softest manner, opened their sense of his case; namely, that, in their apprehensions, he had been very defective in the character to which he had pretended; that great sufferings must be the punishment of great sins; and that they could recommend to him no other method of regaining his former peace and prosperity, but repentance, and seeking unto God for pardon. In short, they soon declared plainly, that they judged he had been a very wicked man, and that his calamities were an evident indication of the wrath of God against him as such. This Job flatly denied; and this is the matter in dispute between him and his friends: which dispute, as is usual in such cases, was carried on with a growing eagerness and heat on both sides; and on both sides might occasion some expressions too strong and exaggerating.

His friends argue from experience, and what they had observed to be the usual method of Divine Providence. They had seen many instances of wicked men, or of those who had passed for such; remarkably punished; and hence they formed to themselves a general maxim, that where they saw great wretchedness and sufferings, there must be crimes proportionably great. To this Job also opposes observation and experience;

rience; and shews, that the rule of judging they had formed to themselves, was by no means right, or without exception; that good men were sometimes afflicted, and the wicked flourishing and happy; and that, for the most part, things were dealt out here promiscuously; that this was more especially observable in times of war and pestilence, and such other sweeping calamities where the good and bad fall undistinguished. *Chap. ix. 22, 23.* To all which he adds, that it was a very heavy aggravation of his misery, to hear his friends, so well acquainted with him, men of sense and distinction, charge him with crimes which his soul abhorred, and of which God, who had afflicted him, knew that he was innocent. To him he would appeal, and still adhere in life and death, though he did not know why he had dealt so severely with him. And so strongly did Job assert the integrity of his religion and virtue, (*chapters xxix. and xxxi.*) that his friends, though perhaps not convinced, were however put to silence (*chap. xxxii. 1.*).

Upon this, *Elibu*, a young man of good understanding, who, probably, with others, was a bystander and witness to this debate (*chap. xxxii. 15.*) acts as moderator between Job and his friends, and censures both very freely and judiciously; only he charges Job with no crime as the cause of his afflictions, but thinks he had not managed the dispute about them with so much calmness and submission to God as became his piety.

Finally, the Lord answered Job out of the *whirlwind* (the Septuagint add, *and clouds*), a token of the Divine Presence. So *Ezekiel's* visions were introduced, *Ezek. i. 4.* *And I looked, and behold, a whirlwind came out of the North, a great cloud and a fire.* Perhaps *Elibu* saw this token of the Divine Presence approaching. *Job. xxxvii. 22, &c.* *Fair weather* [חַדָּשׁ gold, splendor, the splendor of the Divine Presence. See *Schultens* in loc.] *cometh* [יָבֹא will come, or is coming, speedily] *out of the North; with God is terrible Majesty.* The speech of Deity, (*chap. xxxviii. xxxix. xl. xli.*) most inimitably grand and sublime, representing the vast extent of the Divine Wisdom and power in the works of creation, which Job and his friends had well studied, and from which they knew how to deduce proper conclusions, shews, 1. That all things in the sky, the air, the earth, the sea, are produced and disposed in a manner far beyond the reach of human wisdom and power. Consequently, 2. That man is not qualified to dispose of himself, or of any other being. That God may have wise and good reasons for his ways and works, and dealings with us, which we cannot comprehend; and therefore it is our duty, in all cases, to acquiesce and submit. 3. That he who has given various natures and instincts to animals, can give being and life, when and where, and in what degree he pleases. 4. That he is present to, cares for, sustains and directs every living thing; and therefore that we ought to trust in him for a happy issue out of any of his inflictions. 5. That the wisest of men should be very cautious and modest in censuring the ways of Providence.

Chap. xlii. Job humbleth himself before God, sacrificeth for his friends; his family is restored, his estate is doubled.

RULES to be observed in expounding the Book of Job.

I. He that would rightly explain this book must, as much as he can, imagine himself in the same afflicted condition.

II. Every daring thought, or ardent expression, which occurs in the speeches of this afflicted and exasperated man, is not to be vindicated; yet, as he was a great man, and a prince, he may be allowed to use bold and animated language.

III. We shall certainly judge amiss, if we think every thing wrong, which will not suit with the politeness of our manners. Allowance must be made for the simplicity of those times.

IV. In judging of Job's character, we must set the noble strains of his piety against the unguarded expressions of his sorrow.

V. It is not his innocence, strictly speaking, which Job insists on, but his sincerity. *Chap. vii. 20, 21.*

VI. Except their hard censures of Job, his friends speak well and religiously.

VII. His friends encouraged Job to hope for a temporal deliverance; (*chap. v. 18, &c. vii. 20, &c. xi. 14, &c.*) but Job despaired of it, and expected his bodily disorder would terminate in death, (*chap. vi. 11, 12. vii. 6, 7, 8, 21. xvii. 1, 13, 14, 15. xix. 10.* Though, in the increasing heat of the dispute, they seem to drop this sentiment, in their following answers, as if they supposed Job to be too bad to hope for any favour from God.) He hoped, however, that his character would be cleared in the day of judgment: though he was greatly concerned that it could not be cleared before; that after a life led in the most conspicuous virtues, his reputation, in the opinion of his nearest friends, would set under a black cloud, and, with regard to the ignorant and profane, leave an odious reproach upon a profession of religion. This touched him to the heart; exasperated all his sufferings, and made him often wish, that God would bring him to his trial here, in this life; that his integrity might be vindicated, and all, friends and enemies, might understand the true end or design of God in his sufferings; and the honour of religion might be secured. *Chap. x. ii. 2, 3. Is it good unto thee; that thou shouldst—shine upon the counsel of the wicked? who from my case take occasion to reproach and vilify true religion, and to confirm themselves in their wicked and idolatrous practices. Chap. viii. 20, 21, 22. xi. 17—20, xvi. 9—11.*

VIII. He could only affirm his integrity, but could give no special satisfactory reason, why God should afflict him in a manner so very extraordinary, and beyond all preceding cases that were ever known in the world. This very much perplexed and embarrassed his mind, and laid him under a great disadvantage in the dispute. And, for one thing, it is on this account that he is so earnest to come to a conference with God, to know his mind and meaning. *Chap. x. 2. Shew me wherefore thou contendest with me.* See Bp. PATRICK's Paraphrase upon the place, from ver. 2d to the 8th. He knew very well he could not absolutely justify himself before God, *chap. ix. 2, 3, &c. ver. 17. For he breaks*

me with a tempest, he multiplieth my wounds without a cause, or without any apparent reason. Chap. vii. 12, 20. The whole xxiii chapter relates to this point; in which he wishes he could come to the dwelling-place of God, (ver. 3.) and spread his case before him, and argue about it at large, (ver. 4.) for he had turned his thoughts every way, and could make nothing of it, (ver. 8, 9.) only he was sure God knew he was an upright man, (ver. 10, 11, 12.) But, (ver. 13.) he is in one *באחד* or in unity, supreme above all others, absolutely entire, keeping his mind and designs to himself; and none can turn, or oblige him to alter his resolution. All that we can say is, that he doth whatever is agreeable to his own wisdom. For (ver. 14.) what he hath resolved to inflict upon me he hath accomplished; and many such things he doth, of which he will not give us the reason. To the same purpose understand chap. xxvii. 2, 3, 4, 14. and chap. xxviii. 2. He hath taken away my judgment, i. e. the rule by which I might judge of the reason of my afflictions. This point, in reference to God, *Elihu* tells him (chap. xxxiii. 13.) he had urged to no purpose, seeing he gives no account of his matters, or will not reveal to us the secrets of his Providence.

IX. In such a noble performance, if any thing seems to be said not in consistency, or not in character, we should rather suspect our own judgment, than the good sense of the Author. The fault is not in the book, but in our understanding.

X. That sense which best agrees with the subject, or the point in hand, or which stands in the best connexion with the context, should always be judged the best sense.

CRITICISMS.

Chap. i. 5. To bless a person is a form of valediction, 2 Sam. xix. 39. So here, *My sons have taken leave of God.* And so 1 Kings, xxi. 13. *Naboth hath bid farewell to God and the King, or hath treated them with contempt.*

Chap. iii. 25, 26. *The thing that I greatly feared is come upon me, &c.* This alludes to the loss of his children, for whom he was very much concerned, chap. i. 5. But chap. xxix. 18. and xxx. 26. relate to his circumstances in general.

Chap. xiii. 12. *Your remembrances זכרונות your [quoting of] memorable sayings are like ashes, or dirt; your bodies גביתם your heaps, eminencies, your strongest arguments, to heaps of clay, soon washed away.*

C H A P. XXIV.

The Doctrines of the PATRIARCHAL AGE.

THE instructions particularly designed to be given in the Book of *Job*, might not be so well understood in that age of the world; namely, that great sufferings are not always an argument of great sins; but that very good men may be very much afflicted in this world; that therefore we should not censure any under calamities, be the hand of God ever so apparent, unless the crimes be likewise certain and apparent. That we ought not to complain of God in any condition, as if he neglected us, or dealt hardly with us, but rather meekly submit to his Blessed Will; who never doth any thing without reason, though we cannot always comprehend it; adoring and revering the unsearchable depths of his Wise Counsel, and believing that all at last will turn out to our advantage, if like his servant *Job* we persevere in faith, hope, and patience. This was *Job*'s real character, though not without errors. No error can be discerned in his behaviour, but what the uncharitable censures of his friends provoked him to. Thus he was put upon too frequent and too strong justifications of himself, being withal extremely perplexed to give a plain and satisfactory account why God afflicted him so severely.

God, in the issue, satisfied him, that he had just and weighty reasons; and, in particular, by doubling his prosperity, that he designed to make him a pattern of patience and reward. *James v. 11. Behold, we account them happy who endure patiently the greatest sufferings. Ye have heard of the wonderful patience of Job, and have seen, in his case, the happy end to which the Lord brought his calamities.* Whence we may learn, that under the severest visitations, the Lord is very compassionate and merciful to the sincere and upright, and will amply recompense them in a future world.

Thus the great point in religion, before dark and doubtful, relating to the Providence of God, and the sufferings of good men, is cleared up with such evidence, as can no where else be found but in the gospel of *Jesus Christ*.

Though this point might not be so well understood, before it was thus illustrated, yet there are several other important articles of religion, of which *Job* and his friends, and doubtless many others, had very just and clear conceptions: as the being and perfections of God; that we can receive neither good nor evil but from him, the Author of our being, and Disposer of all events; that he sees and orders all things in heaven and earth; that there can be no iniquity with him; that he is the Friend and Patron of virtue, and hates, and will punish vice and wickedness; nevertheless, that he is merciful and gracious, and will certainly pardon and bless those who sincerely repent of their sins, and return unto him: that he is to be supremely revered and worshipped, as the sole Sovereign of the universe, by prayers and sacrifices, by purity and integrity

heart, by justice in all our dealings, by all acts of charity, goodness, and benevolence to others, particularly to the helpless and indigent; by temperance and sobriety, curbing irregular desires and appetites: that men should not be elated, and puffed up by large possessions, nor put their trust in riches, *chap. xxxi. 24, 25*; that they should abhor idolatry, *ver. 26, 27, 28*; that they should not wish evil to an enemy, nor rejoice in his misfortunes, *ver. 29, 30*, much less think of murdering him; that they should abstain from adultery and fornication, *ver. 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11*; from theft, rapine, and deceit, *ver. 5, 6, 7*. For the punishment of which crimes he mentions judges in his days, (*ver. 11, 28*.) and was himself one of the chief, *chap. xxix. 7, 9, &c.*

These, and such like principles of natural religion, are allowed both by *Job* and his friends, and therefore were the religion of the Patriarchs, as indeed they are the principles of true and acceptable religion in all ages and parts of the world.

Further; the religious in that, and the preceding, as well as subsequent ages, I am persuaded, entertained the faith and hope of a future state. This hath been the popular belief of all nations from time immemorial; and it is scarce credible, in the nature of the thing, that the greatest happiness of this life, which might at any uncertain time, and at length would infallibly and totally be demolished by death, should ever become a solid principle of religion, considered as the sole reward of piety and virtue.

However it appears, that *Job* expected a future world, for he had hope with regard to his condition, but not in this world; therefore, his hope must be in a future state. *Chap. xiii. 15. 16. וְיִקְרַע אֶת אֵימָתִי לֹא אֶחָד לִי* *Lo, or certainly, he will slay me: I will not hope, non est quod sperem, I have no ground to hope, that I shall survive, my sufferings, yet will I maintain the integrity of my own ways before him. And even this shall be for salvation to me; [where but in a future world?] for a hypocrite shall not come before him; shall not have confidence to present himself before his tribunal. Chap. xxiii. 10. But he knows the way that I take; when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold. As Job absolutely despairs of any temporal deliverance, this must necessarily be understood of the hope he entertained of having his innocence cleared in the day of judgment.*

He had, moreover, a notion of the resurrection. *Chap. xiv. 7. For there is hope of a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Ver. 8. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground, ver. 9. yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a new plant. Ver. 10. And shall man die, and totally waste away? And shall man give up the ghost, and where is he? Or be no more for ever? Ver. 11. As the waters fail from the sea, as the sea ebbs and flows again, and the river, or brook in the dry sandy country of Arabia, decays, and dries up, in summer, but is made a brook again by the rains and snows of winter; ver. 12. So man lieth down, and riseth not, till the heavens be no more; they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep, to return to the affairs and possessions of this world. Ver. 13. And Oh that thou, O God,*

God, *wouldst hide me in the grave, in that state of sleep and insensibility, that thou wouldst keep me secret, in that silent retirement, until thy wrath be past; that thou wouldst appoint me a set time, and remember me to restore me to a new and better life!* Ver. 14. *If a man die, shall he live again?* Or shall a man live again, after he is dead? Then I will patiently wait all the days of the time thou shalt be pleased to appoint, till my happy renovation shall come. Ver. 15. *Thou shalt call, and I will joyfully answer thee; thou wilt have a longing desire to restore the work of thy hands.* Ver. 16. *Though now, at present, thou numberest my steps, &c.*

Chap. xix. 23. Observe the solemn introduction; *Oh, that my words, which I am going to speak, were now written! Oh, that they were printed in a book!* Ver. 24. *That they were graven with an iron pen and lead, in the rock [my grave-stone, SCHULTENS], for ever!* This is too grand for temporal deliverance. Why should that be recorded upon a rock, as a lasting monument to all mankind? But it very well suits the noble and sublime hope of a resurrection and future judgment, worthy of universal attention. Ver. 25. *For I know, or am well assured, that my Vindicator, [the Vindicator of my innocence is] living, and that at the last over the dust, [the dead, that hath been reduced to dust,] he shall arise, [to execute judgment, Job xxxi. 13, 14, Psal. lxxiv. 22. lxxxii. 8.]* Verse 26. *And though after my skin they shall destroy this, [or this body shall be destroyed,] yet from my restored flesh I shall with pleasure see God.* [Vide R. חזק] verse 27. *Whom I shall see for myself, [to do me justice, as chap. v. 27.—for thy good [for thyself] and mine eyes shall behold; but a stranger to goodness and justice shall not behold him in the same manner. My reins are consumed in my bosom [in ardent expectation of this glorious event. N. B. בלתי עין נפש vel חזק desiderium, ingens, flagrans et consumens significat; videfis Psalmis lxxxiv. 2. cxix. 82, 123. cxliii. 7. Sic quoque de בלתי renes, statuendum.]* Observe—if after his skin, his body also was destroyed, how could he outlive this destruction, so as to be a man prosperous and happy again in this world? Had this been his fixed belief, his frequent wishing for death would be utterly unaccountable, and his tragical complaints ridiculous, and his despair of health and happiness in this world a contradiction.

If wicked men, though sometimes in great wretchedness, (chap. xxi. 16, &c.) are also sometimes prosperous and powerful, *verse 7, &c.* the proper inference is, *verse 30. That the wicked are reserved unto the day of destruction, and that they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath; not in this world; for that would have cut the neck of Job's argument at once, and have fallen in directly with that of his friends.* Chap. xxxi. 2, 3.

Chap. xxvii. 8. *For what is the hope of an hypocrite, in the future state, though he hath gained much in this world; when God takes away his soul at death?* This supposeth a hope after death.—Again, chap. xxxi. 13, 14. *What then shall I do when God riseth up to judgment?* Not in this world, where his sufferings were as great as could be, and where he did not expect they would be abated.—Lastly, his friends had not spoken of God the thing that was right, as Job had done, chap. xlii. 7, 8. But setting

aside a future state, the friends would have spoke more worthily of God, by vindicating his Providence in the exact distribution of good and evil in this life; and *Job*, who asserted the contrary, would have misrepresented his dealings with mankind.

The Patriarchs before and after *Job*, and the *Israelites* before *Christ* came, had a notion of a future state.—By sacrifices was plainly shewn, that a way was open to the Divine Favour and Acceptance; and the favour of God imports happiness, which to *Abel*, who was for that very reason, because he was accepted of God, unjustly slain, could be only in a future state. *Heb.* xi. 4. *Kai di avrns amobavw and dying on account of that his faith he yet speaketh* an invisible future state of reward.—The translation of *Enoch* and *Elijah*, in two distant ages, were well-known demonstrations of a future state of reward and glory.—They were certainly acquainted with God and Angels, and heaven where both resided. *Gen.* xxii. 11. And the connexion between this world and heaven, by the ministry of Angels, was clearly represented to *Jacob*. *Genesis* xxviii. 12. They must, therefore, have a notion of another and better world.

The promise to *Abraham*, *Genesis* xvii. 7. *I will be a God unto thee*, we shall find, is the same with the gospel promise, and therefore must include the gift of eternal life. And as that promise was sure to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, when they were dead, (*Exodus* iii. 6.) our Lord rightly infers, that they would rise again. (*Luke* xx. 37, 38.) *For God is not a God of the dead*, who cannot, as such, be benefited by him, *but of the living*; for though they are dead, *they all live unto him*, or with respect of him, as he will raise them all to life again.—And the Patriarchs thus understood this promise; for when they considered and represented their life in this world as a pilgrimage, *Genesis* xlvii. 9. or a state of sojourning or travelling, they plainly intimated that they were seeking *πατρίδα*, their Father's country, *i. e.* the heavenly country or city. *Heb.* xi. 13—16. Had the prospects of *Moses* been confined to this world, doubtless he would have preferred the pleasures and honours of *Pharaoh's* court; but by refusing them, and choosing rather to suffer with the people of God, he plainly indicated, that *he had respect to the future recompense of reward*. *Heb.* xi. 24, 25, 26.

It is certain the *Jews*, even during their peculiarity, were under the *Abrahamic*, or Gospel covenant, promising the pardon of sin, and eternal life, as well as under the law, or *Sinai* covenant. *Deut.* xxix. 12, 13. And surely, if they were admitted to a covenant of life and immortality, they could not be ignorant of a future state. Nor can it be judged at all improbable, that *Moses* propounds eternal life to them in such passages as this, *Deut.* xxx. 6. *The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayst live.* This our Lord understood of eternal life, *Luke* x. 25, &c. When one asked him, *What shall I do to inherit eternal life?* he sent him to the law of *Moses*; and when the enquirer readily quoted the rule of life given by *Moses*, our Lord replied, *Thou hast answered well; this do, and thou shalt live*, meaning eternally. Which leads us to understand *Moses* in the same sense, when he proposes life as the reward of their sincere religion, virtue, and goodness. *Deut.* xxx. 15,

19, 20. *Lev. xviii. 5.* compared with *Romans x. 5. Gal. iii. 10, 11, 12.* Indeed life and prosperity in the land of *Canaan*, is intermixed with such promises. This is to be considered as addressed to them in a national capacity, and with respect to the covenant of peculiarity. [Note—*Life* is put for eternal life, *John vi. 47, 48, 52, 53, 58.*] ראשית is the beginning, or former part; אחרית properly denotes, what comes after, the after part, time, or state. Thus *Job's* time, after his afflictions were over, is called his *ahharith*, chap. *xlii. 12.* So is a man's posterity, or those that come after him in being. *Amos iv. 2.*

Sometimes it signifies the happy consequence, or sequel of a course of action, *Proverbs xxiv. 14, 20*; frequently after-days, or times in this world; but is never used more properly than to denote a future state after death. *Num. xxiii. 10. Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my ahharith, my after or future state, be like his. Psalm lxxiii. 3—18.* The wicked lived in prosperity, and died an easy death. *There are no bands in their death*, verse 4. I envied them, saith *David*, verse 17, until I went into the sanctuary of God; then understood I their ahharith, future state, after death. Surely thou hast set them in slippery places; thou hast cast them down into eternal destruction, &c. Verse 20. As a dream after one is awake; so, O Lord, when thou awakest [בער in awaking them, or when they are awakened] thou wilt despise, [debase, pour contempt upon, *Daniel xii. 2.*] their image [צלם their vain, shadowy, unsubstantial condition.] Verse 23. Nevertheless I am continually with thee, [the object of thy special care.] Verse 24—27. Thou shalt guide me by thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory, &c. *Proverbs xxiii. 17, 18.* Surely there is an end, ahharith, an after-state. *Jer. xvii. 11. As the bird Kore hatcheth eggs, which she did not lay, so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end* [ובאחריתו in his after—or future-state,] shall be נבל a fool, vile, contemptible. Verse 13.—They that depart from me shall be written in the earth, not registered in heaven, in the book of life. *Deut. xxxii. 29.*—their latter end, their after—or future-state. *Psalms xxxvii. 37, 38.*—the end, ahharith, of that man is peace, happiness. But the transgressors shall be utterly destroyed; [where but in the future world?] the end, ahharith, of the wicked shall be cut off. *Deut. xiv. 1, 2. Ye are the children of the Lord your God; (of an immortal Father) ye shall not cut yourselves, nor make any baldness between your eyes for the dead.* They must not mourn as those that had no hope, *1 Thes. iv. 13.* Adoption includes the redemption of the body. *Romans viii. 23.*—*Isaiah xxvi. 19. Thy dead men shall live, with my deaa body shall they arise: awake, and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, which makes herbs to spring and grow up. But the earth shall cast out the wicked dead, the rephaim, as abortives.*

See *Psalms xv. xvi. 9, &c. xvii. 15.*—when I awake out of death. *Daniel xii. 2. Psalms xxiii. 6. xxiv. 3, 4, 5. Eccl. iii. 16, 17. xii. 13. Isaiah xxv. 8. li. 6.*

These instances may satisfy, that, although life and immortality are brought into the fullest light by the Gospel, a future state was not unknown from the beginning to the coming of *Christ*. We may therefore take it for a good rule, that the words *life* and *salvation*, in the Old Testament,

Testament, may be understood of a *future life and salvation*, when the context will admit of such an interpretation.

We have found, that in the Patriarchal Age, among the nations, before the Jewish peculiarity, there were persons eminent for religion and virtue, who worshipped the living God, and enjoyed extraordinary communications from him; but that many were of a different character, wicked and ungodly men; and that idolatry, captivating the minds of the ignorant, weak, and vicious, spread so fast, that it threatened the total extinction of good morals, and of the knowledge and pure worship of God. How the Father of mankind counteracted this new instance of degeneracy we shall see, when we have settled the Scripture-Chronology, and considered the judgment of God upon *Sodom and Gomorrah*.

C H A P. XXV.

*The SCRIPTURE-CHRONOLOGY from the DELUGE to the EXODUS.
The Wickedness and Ruin of SODOM, &c. 857 Years.*

| Year before Christ. | Year of the World. | Year of Shem's Age. | Proofs. | Names of the Patriarchs, and their Ages, when they had Sons. |
|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------|--|
| 2346 | 1658 | 100 | Gen. xi. 10. | Shem, after the Flood 2 and begat |
| | | | — 12. | Arphaxad lived 35 and begat |
| | | | — 14. | Salah lived - 30 and begat |
| | | | — 16. | Heber lived - 34 and begat |
| | | | — 18. | Peleg lived - 30 and begat |
| | | | — 20. | Reu lived - 32 and begat |
| | | | — 22. | Serug lived - 30 and begat |
| | | | — 24. | Nahor lived - 29 and begat |
| | | | | Terah lived 130 * and begat |
| | | | | |
| 1921 | 2083 | 525 | — xii. 4. | Abraham 75 { when the Promise was made. |
| | | 550 | — xxi. 5. | After that - 25 and begat |
| | | | — xxv. 26. | Isaac lived - 60 † and begat |
| 1706 | 2298 | | — xlvii. 9. | Jacob aged - 130 { when he removed to Egypt. |
| | | | | Israelites continued there } 215 |
| 1491 | 2513 | | | |

* GEN. xi. 26. it is said, *Terah* lived 70 years, and begat *Abram*, *Nahor*, and *Haran*. But *Terah* was 205 years old when he died in *Haran*, Gen. xi. 32. After *Terah's* death, *Abram* left *Haran*; and then was he 75 years old, Gen. xii. 4. which being subtracted from 205, *Terah's* age, gives 130, the year of *Terah* when *Abram* was born.

† Add

+ Add *Isaac's* age (60) when *Jacob* was born, to the years from the Deluge, and you will have 512, the year after the Deluge when *Jacob* was born. *Shem* was 98 years old at the Deluge, and lived 600 years, *Gen.* xi. 10, 11. Take 98 from 600, and there remains 502, the years *Shem* lived after the Deluge; which, deducted from 512, the year after the Deluge, in which *Jacob* was born, leaves ten years, the time between *Shem's* death and *Jacob's* birth. Hence it follows, that *Isaac* lived with *Shem* 50, and that *Abram* lived with *Shem* 150 years. *Isaac* also, who lived 180 years, (*Gen.* xxxv. 28.) lived 120 with *Jacob*, i. e. till within ten years of *Jacob's* going down into *Egypt*. And as *Shem* lived with *Methuselah* 98, and *Methuselah* with *Adam* 240, three persons, *Methuselah*, *Shem*, and *Isaac*, might bring down the account of things from *Adam* till within ten years of the going down of the *Israelites* into *Egypt*. From the Deluge to the Promise was 427 years.

From the Promise to the time when *Jacob* and his family went down into *Egypt* was 215 years. And from the Promise to the time when the children of *Israel* came out of *Egypt* was 430 years. Compare *Exod.* xii. 41. with *Gal.* iii. 17. Therefore the time of their continuance in *Egypt* must be 215 years.

Joseph was 30 years of age when preferred by *Pharaoh*, *Gen.* xli. 46. After that there were seven years of plenty, and two of famine (*Gen.* xlv. 11.) before *Jacob* came down into *Egypt*. *Joseph*, therefore, was then 39 years of age: after that he lived 71 years, for he lived in all 110 years, *Gen.* i. 22, 26. Take 71 out of 215, and there remains 144, the time the *Israelites* remained slaves in *Egypt* after *Joseph's* death. *Exod.* i. 8.

Before we come to the promise made to *Abraham*, which was the foundation-stone of the grand scheme to preserve religion and morals in the world, we must turn our thoughts a while to a particular dispensation which God inflicted upon four cities, *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, *Admah* and *Zeboim*, (*Gen.* xiv. 2. *Deut.* xxix. 23.) that stood in a very extensive, fruitful, and pleasant vale, along the sides of the river *Jordan*. *Gen.* xiii. 10. So far had idolatry, and the immorality which usually attends it, infected the world, that these four populous cities, and *Zoar*, which lay not far from them, (*Gen.* xiv. 2. xix. 20.) were become excessively debauched and wicked, indulging to that vilest sort of lewdness which is commonly called Sodomy, going after strange flesh, (*Jude* 7.) the men burning in their lust one towards another, men with men working that which is unseemly. *Rom.* i. 27.

Therefore God purposed to punish them with an exemplary and total destruction. *Abraham*, in the benevolence of his soul, interceded for their preservation. *Gen.* xviii. 23. And such is the mercy of God, so great his regard to virtuous characters, and so ready for their sakes to bestow blessings, even upon the unworthy, that he would have spared them, if but ten truly sober and virtuous persons could have been found in all those five cities; but they were universally and irreclaimably corrupt. Therefore, sparing *Zoar* for *Lot's* sake, (*Gen.* xix. 20, 21.) he destroyed the other four cities, with all their inhabitants, by pouring upon them the most dreadful storm of fire and brimstone from heaven; and also, probably, by a terrible earthquake, that broke up the very soil of the earth,

earth, and by an irruption of bituminous waters, which turned the whole vale into one heavy, fetid, and unwholesome lake, called the *dead*, or *salt sea*, about 30 miles long, and 10 miles broad, *Gen. xix. 24, 25*, which remains unto this day.

This dreadful instance of Divine Vengeance, through the mercy of God, removed the bad examples of those daring sinners, had a natural fitness to awaken and reform the surviving impious, and was very properly intended to remain a perpetual monument of the wrath of God upon the wickedness of mankind. *2 Pet. ii. 6. Jude, ver. 7. Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.* Note—the fire was *eternal*; as it totally and for ever destroyed those cities never to be built again. God thus revealed his future wrath from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. And though there be no present appearances of it, we should not therefore be secure. For, as our Lord observes, *Luke xvii. 28. The Sodomites did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded, thoughtless and secure; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom, it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and destroyed them all. Even thus shall it be in the day that the Son of Man is revealed.*

Gen. xix. 24. The LORD rained fire and brimstone from the LORD in heaven. This is an Hebraism, where the noun itself is put instead of the personal pronoun.

Gen. xix. 26. But his wife looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt. Note—The sulphureous storm did not begin to fall upon Sodom till Lot was safely arrived at Zoar, *Gen. xix. 22.* But his wife looked back before he reached Zoar; for she looked back from behind him, as he was going to Zoar. Therefore, when she looked back, Sodom, and the fine country about it, appeared in the same pleasant and serene state as ever. Consequently, she looked with a look of affection to the place, and of regret to leave it, and their goods that were in it, according to the import of the verb *נבט*—This implied unbelief and distrust of what the angels had affirmed, that God would immediately destroy the place. She did not believe, or she did not regard it; she stopped by the way, and left her husband to go by himself; she would go no further, and might be at a considerable distance from Zoar, and so near to Sodom, as, probably, to be involved in the terrible shower, and thereby turned into a nitro-sulphureous pillar. This gives the proper sense and force of our Lord's admonition, *Luke xvii. 32. Remember Lot's wife.* Let the judgment of God upon her warn you of the folly and danger of hankering after, and being loath to part with small and temporal things, when your life and happiness, the greatest and most lasting concerns, are at stake.

C H A P. XXVI.

The State of RELIGION in the World, when GOD made the Promise to ABRAHAM.

THOUGH we may be sure, that our State of Trial hath been, from the beginning of the world, perfectly well adjusted, as to the proper balance of means and temptations, for all the purposes of Divine Wisdom and Goodness, yet it is certain that the contagion of evil so far spread in the earliest ages, as, in process of time, to threaten the total extinction of true Religion and good morals. This is evident in the case of the old world, where wickedness and impiety had at length, and by degrees, infected the whole race of mankind, except Noah's single family. And in about 450 years after the deluge, idolatry and wickedness had spread and corrupted the world so far, that Sodom and four other cities, being universally debauched, were destroyed (one excepted for the reason already given) by a most tremendous judgment. The Amorites, and several other neighbouring nations, were then filling up the measure of their iniquity; (*Gen. xv. 16, 19, 20, 21.*) which in about 400 years after was quite full; and God, who might have destroyed them, as he did Sodom, &c. gave the Israelites a commission to expel, or extirpate them.

This spreading corruption, after the deluge, is not to be assigned to simple irreligion, but to religion directed to wrong objects and purposes. While men retained the knowledge of the true God, they cared not to glorify him by the practice of virtue and holiness, nor were thankful for his benefits. *Rom. i. 21, 22.* And artful men, through pride and wantonness, indulging to idle conceits and false reasonings, involved their own understanding, and that of others, in the thickest clouds of error and delusion. Probably, they represented the heavenly bodies, the sun, moon, and stars, as illustrious intelligences, who, being so eminently exalted, must have the highest interest in the favour of God, the direction of human affairs, and the distribution of all temporal blessings; and therefore it would be sufficient to all the purposes of religion, to secure their friendship, as mediators between God and them. Thus they might be driven, enticed, drawn in, to worship them, (*Deut. iv. 19.*) by such impious rites as were invented by the folly and ignorance of the same sophisters, and adapted to the depraved minds of such as listened to them. Thus they might be deceived into the practice of all manner of lewdness and vice. For the attributes of those supposed deities, and benefactors of mankind, being feigned purely by human imagination, they would naturally be represented by men, who had their own interests and lusts to serve, in such manner as best suited the corrupt taste and inclinations of those who were disposed to follow them. If this was not the case at first, it may easily be conceived to have been so in process of time, by after-improvements upon the original scheme of idolatry. And by this method men would be led to believe they might be religious, and

and gain health, long life, fruitful seasons, plenty, prosperity, not only without the practice of virtue and holiness, but positively by lewd and wicked practices; and thus religion would be turned into an encouragement to vice, and the principles of virtue and goodness would be extinguished.

Whether they were seduced precisely after this manner or not, the fact is certain, that their abominable idolatries were attended with abominable lusts and intemperance, 1 *Pet.* iv. 3. Add to this, that cunning men, who knew how to make their own advantage of the foibles of mankind, introduced into their minds notions of fate, destiny, fortune, chance, necessity, with many other delusions. Hence arose professors of the vilest arts, pretending to look into futurity, to gratify malicious desires, to secure good, and prevent bad luck to those who consulted them. *Deut.* xviii. 10. *Diviners, observers of times, enchanters, witches, or such as pretend to work upon the mind, or body, for evil purposes, by herbs or potions; charmers, consultants with a pretended familiar spirit, wizards, necromancers.* And so far were they infatuated, that they made their sons and daughters to pass through the fire, under the notion of sacrifices to their idols; probably, to gain their blessing upon their children, and to make them healthy and fortunate. *Deut.* xii. 31. xviii. 10. *Lev.* xviii. 21. xx. 2. Thus their hope and trust, and their regards, were diverted from God and his Providence to vain idols and the vilest impostors.

The neglect and abuse of understanding, and the indulged irregular inclinations of the heart, were doubtless the spring and principal cause of this defection from God and virtue. But we may believe it was forwarded and completed by the suggestions and instigations of the Devil and his angels; *the Prince of the power of the Air, the Spirit whom God permits to work in the children of disobedience,* (*Ephes.* ii. 2.) and to *deceive the nations.* *Rev.* xx. 2, 3. For when men receive not the love of the truth, that they may be saved, God judicially sends them strong delusion, that they may believe a lie. That they may all be condemned, who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness. 2 *Thess.* ii. 9—12.

Thus we see how idolatry first began, and by what means it might, as it certainly did, spread in the world; and would have prevailed universally, as the remaining virtuous dropped off, and as men of understanding happened to be drawn in by various allurements. For the heart even of *Solomon*, the great and wise, was, by the love of strange women, so far turned away after idol gods, that he built high places and altars in honour of them, even in the neighbourhood of the city *Jerusalem.* 1 *Kin.* xi. 1—8.

To prevent the universal prevalence of idolatry, and to preserve among mankind the knowledge and worship of the living and true God, the wise and gracious Father of men was pleased to advance a new and noble scheme, which, under several variations and improvements, was to reach to the end of time. The scheme was this, to choose and adopt one family, afterwards to be formed into a nation, instructed in religious knowledge by God himself, and favoured with such extraordinary privileges, and honours, above all other nations of the earth, as were in their own nature adapted to engage them, by the most rational motives, to adhere

to God and his worship. At the same time, to prevent their being infected with the idolatries and vices of the rest of the world, as they certainly would have been, had they mingled with them, they were to be distinguished and separated from all other people by their diet, their dress, and divers civil and religious rites and ceremonies; but more particularly by a secret mark in the flesh, by which they might be certainly known from all other men. Thus they would be kept together in a body, and hindered from mixing with, and being corrupted by, their idolatrous neighbours, and in every respect fitted to be an example and instruction to them under the various dispensations wherewith they were visited. And further, their laws and religious institutions being originally recorded in books, would more certainly be preserved and known in all future ages and generations. Thus God provided a store-house of religious knowledge, a whole nation of priests, *Exod. xix. 6.* a school of instruction and wisdom for all the world. Or the nation of *Israelites* may be considered as a piece of leaven which in process of time was to leaven the whole lump or mass of mankind.

Abraham, a person of the most eminent piety and virtue, was chosen to be the head and father of this nation; that, as he would always be held in great veneration among them, he might always shine before their eyes as an illustrious pattern of godliness.

The ground of this scheme, and of God's singular regards to *Abraham* and his posterity, was the COVENANT OF GRACE, the PROMISE or grant of favour and blessings to mankind in *Jesus Christ* our Lord. Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, though not manifested till the last times. *1 Pet. i. 20.* This Covenant or grant was first published to *Adam*, *Gen. iii. 15.* *Her, the woman's, seed shall bruise thy head, O serpent, and thou shalt bruise his heel.* Nor could it be wholly unknown to the Patriarchs; but it was much more clearly revealed to *Abraham*. *Gen. xii. 3. xvii. 7. xviii. 18. xxii. 16, 17, 18.* And this is the subject which now requires our particular attention. [See the *Treatise on the Covenant of Grace, &c.*]

C H A P. XXVII.

The Methods of DIVINE WISDOM in raising up a new and religious NATION.

TO return to the age in which *Abraham* lived. The delusions of idolatry were so strong, and the human understanding so weak, that all nations seem to have run into it at once and alike; and such was the insatiating and spreading nature of the infection, that there was no rational prospect of the reformation of any one of them. Violence could

could not be used, argument and reasoning would have no effect, the most dreadful judgments were forgotten, or disregarded*. The knowledge and worship of the one living and true God, the great principle of moral goodness, and of public and private happiness, would have been totally lost in the earth. But the Father and Governor of men provided a remedy. Instead of destroying all nations, as at the deluge, it was the merciful scheme of Divine Wisdom to create, out of one pious and faithful person, *Abraham*, a new and religious nation, separated from all the rest, in order to ascertain among them, and at length among all nations, right sentiments of his Being, Perfections, and Providence. And it is greatly worth our while to observe the steps and Methods by which God was pleased to train them up for this purpose.

First, *Abraham* is required to cast himself wholly upon God's Providence, by removing, at God's command, from his own kindred and country, to an unknown distant land, which God would shew him; assuring him of his presence and special blessing. *Genesis* xii. 1, 2, 3. Thus God took him under his immediate care and protection. In this strange land he wandered about as long as he lived, but God was with him every where. God appeared to him, and conversed with him frequently and familiarly. By extraordinary interpositions, and express declarations, from time to time, God encouraged, directed, prospered, guarded and provided for him. He became very rich, great, and honourable; but all was most visibly the gift and operation of God. God gave him repeated assurances, that he would make of him a great nation, give his posterity the whole land of *Canaan*, and that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed. But he was not to have a son, till the birth of that son was manifestly the extraordinary miraculous effect of Divine Power, and insured the performance of the promises. What could be more engaging than all these circumstances? What more proper to excite in a man, duty, affection, and confidence towards God? The same encouragements, blessings, and promises are repeated to *Isaac*, and afterwards to *Jacob*, and the same heavenly correspondence is kept open with them during their lives. *Egypt*, then a plentiful country, of genius and learning, [*Acts* vii. 22.] the resort of the curious and inquisitive, was chosen to be the nursery of this family. Thither was *Joseph* first carried by a singular Providence, sold for a slave, and most unjustly cast into prison, but only that God might shew himself in his enlargement. By means which God only could provide and direct, he was at once released from a jail, and raised to almost regal honour and authority. And in high dignity and esteem, and with astonishing success, which none but God could give, in the most important affairs, he continued all the days of his life.

By him God predicted seven years of prodigious plenty in *Egypt*, and seven succeeding years of the most distressing famine in the land, and in all the adjacent countries. By this event, *Jacob's* whole family, in all seventy-two souls, were brought to reside, with the great good-will of the king, and of the whole nation, in *Goshen*, the richest province in the

* Reckoning by the age of man, the world was 20 years old; for God called *Abraham* in the year of the world 2083.

the land of *Egypt*, Gen. xlviii. 6. where their situation, manners, and way of living, would keep them separate from their idolatrous neighbours. Gen. xliii. 32. xlv. 34. Thus God, by a surprising train of events, introduced the family of *Abraham* into the nursery where they were to grow up into a nation. At length a prince arose, *who knew*, or regarded, *not Joseph*, Exodus i. 8. Then they fell into a state of slavery, and the severest oppression and suffering, for about 140 years. But this was only to render the power of God more conspicuous in their preservation and deliverance. The more they are oppressed, and the more cruelly they were used, the more they increase and flourish, till they were numerous enough to be formed into a nation. Then *Moses* was miraculously preserved, educated by *Pharaoh's* daughter in all the wisdom of the *Egyptians*, and raised up to be their deliverer. And now the vials of Divine Wrath are poured out one after another upon *Egypt*. God made bare his arm, or gave the most signal and striking demonstrations of his Being and Power, infinitely superior not only to all human strength, but also to all the pretended Deities in which the *Egyptians* trusted. Exodus xii. 12.

To this end (1.) the Divine Wisdom permitted, on this special occasion, *Pharaoh's* magicians, possibly by the ministry of evil spirits, or by extraordinary powers immediately communicated to the enchanters, to imitate some of the miracles which *Moses* wrought, in order to display more clearly his own Divine Power; and to convince both *Egyptians* and *Israelites* of the vanity of such arts, by controlling and defeating them, even when exercised in the highest degree. So a man was born blind, and *Lazarus* died, on purpose to give our Lord an opportunity of demonstrating his power, and the truth of his mission. John ix. 3. xi. 4. And for that reason, an extraordinary power might be permitted to evil spirits to possess the bodies of men, that our Saviour's dominion over the devil and his angels might be more evidently shewn. The invisible world of spirits may undergo many variations, and be subject to different restraints and regulations in different ages, so as to interfere more or less, or not at all in human affairs. *Forin.*

(2.) God hardened *Pharaoh's* heart, by granting him respite from one plague after another, that he might multiply, and so render more conspicuous, the demonstrations of his Being and Supreme Dominion. And this is all that God did towards hardening *Pharaoh's* heart. See Exodus viii. 15. ix. 34, 35, and verse 15, 16. For now, saith the Lord, I have stretched out my hand [in the preceding plague of boils and blains,] and I have smitten thee, and thy people, with the pestilence, and [by this plague] thou mightest have been cut off from the earth. But in very deed for this cause I have raised thee up, [I have restored thee to health, by removing the pestilential boils,] that by respiting thy destruction, I may shew in thee more and greater proofs of my Almighty Power.

All the miracles which God wrought in *Egypt*, were such as must be seen and acknowledged to come from him alone, and not from any possible power of man, or from any natural accidents. This is true of all the ten plagues, but especially of the last. The pestilence, in ordinary cases, sweeps away multitudes promiscuously; but when it singlenth out only the first-born in every family, it must plainly appear to be a judgment

ment immediately from the hand or direction of God; [*Exodus xii. 29.*] as it was to the *Israelites* a just retribution of the cruelty of the *Egyptians* in endeavouring to destroy all their male children. *Exodus i. 16.* [Note—In those ages and circumstances of the world, when men were not so capable of being convinced by abstract reasoning, and probably understood nothing of the perfections of God *a priori*, his supreme authority and omnipotence would be best demonstrated by *facts*, which experimentally proved his uncontrolled dominion over all other powers, and over universal Nature.] At last *Pharaoh* and his people give up the cause. God's superior power is owned, because so dreadfully experienced. The *Egyptians* urge them to depart, and to remove all objections that might hinder their departure, willingly give them the most precious and valuable of their possessions, [which, by the way, might be but equal payment for the labour of so great a multitude, for 140 years.] See *Exodus xii. 33, &c.* Verse 35. *And the children of Israel—יִשְׂרָאֵל asked of the Egyptians jewels, &c. i. e. asked the Egyptians to give them jewels, &c.* [יָשָׁא signifies to *ask to give*, as well as to *lend*. *Josh. xv. 18, 19. xix. 50. Jud. v. 25. viii. 25, 26. Psal. ii. 8.* See Hebrew English Concordance.] Verse 36. *So that they lent unto them, &c. †* So that they readily gave them, &c. וַיִּשְׁאֲלוּ in *Hiphkid* to make to ask, i. e. to encourage, to gratify asking by freely giving. [Note—Upon the occasion of the death of all the first-born among the *Egyptians*, and the departure of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, a commemorative festival, the *passover*, is instituted; an ordinance very proper for preserving the perpetual memory of the power and goodness of God among the *Israelites*.

The *Israelites* leave *Egypt*, in number no less than twenty-four hundred thousand, *Num. i. 45, 46.* and all Nature giveth way before them. A passage is open for them through the Red-sea, which closes upon, and overwhelms *Pharaoh* and his pursuing army. Pillars of cloud and fire, alternately appearing in the air, direct their march. Bitter fountains are made sweet. In a dry, thirsty, barren country, they are supplied with water from the hard and flinty rock, and with food from the sky for forty years together. With all the appearances of glory and dreadful majesty, God, as their King and Sovereign, established his Covenant, or entered into a solemn contract, with them in mount *Horeb*; choosing them for *a peculiar treasure above all people*, *Exodus xix. 5.* and engaging himself to be their God and King, and to bestow on them all national blessings upon condition they were obedient, adhered to his worship, and kept clear of idolatry, with which they had been tinctured in *Egypt*, (*Lev. xvii. 7. Josh. xxiv. 14. Ezek. xx. 8.*) otherwise they might expect the severest judgments, *Deut. xxix. 10, &c.* At the same time he gave them a system of laws and statutes, most excellent in themselves, fitted to their present temper and circumstances, as well as to the future intents and purposes of the Gospel dispensation. Here God took up his residence among them in the tabernacle, afterwards in the temple, setting himself at the head of their affairs, and upon all important occasions directing them as an oracle. And all this, to attach and unite this one nation to himself.

At length, through a train of very striking miracles, (*Jordan* divided, the walls of *Jericho* thrown down) he brought them into the promised land, with a commission to destroy all the inhabitants, the measure of whose iniquity was then full; and who probably were more corrupt than any of their neighbours, and as deserving of destruction as *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, for all the idolatrous, brutish, cruel, incestuous, and unnatural crimes, which universally prevailed amongst them. Had the *Israelites* been mixed with the idolatrous *Canaanites*, they would soon have lost the knowledge of God, and been involved in all their corruptions; but being made the instruments of their destruction, this would give them the greater horror of those crimes, which they knew (for *Moses* had told them, *Deut.* ix. 4, 5.) were thus dreadfully avenged by their arms. Moreover, thus they would give themselves a clear demonstration, that idol-gods had no power to defend and preserve their votaries. Therefore it was not unjust in God to command the destruction of the *Canaanites*, nor cruel in his servants to execute that command, (any more than it is to extirpate outlaws, and the worst of criminals, by legal authority) but in the views of Divine Wisdom, the properest way of extirpating them, considering the effects it would have upon the minds of the *Israelites*.

Here we may observe, (1.) That the *Israelites* made no claim to the land of *Canaan* in their own right. The right was in God, who gave it them. (2.) We may observe a good reason why the Divine Wisdom erected this scheme for preserving true religion, only in the one nation of the *Israelites*. Because, had he selected a pious person and his family, as he selected *Abraham* and his posterity, out of every nation upon earth, then, to make room for them, every nation upon earth must have been devoted to destruction, as the *Canaanites* were. But seeing the whole earth was not filled with violence, injustice, rapine, and oppression, God in much lenity and forbearance was pleased to wink at, or overlook, the ignorance and error of other nations, without punishing them as they deserved, *Acts* xvii. 30. leaving them to the light of Nature, *Acts* xiv. 16. to feel, or grope after his existence and perfections, *Acts* xvii. 26, 27. and to the dictates of conscience, for their conduct in life; while he continued his providential care in giving the supplies of life, and visiting them with suitable dispensations; and will, at last, judge them in perfect equity, making allowance for all unavoidable defects. *Rom.* ii. 6, 10, 11, 12.

Even after the *Israelites* were settled in the land, the danger of idolatry was not over. They were ready on every occasion to catch the infection from their neighbours; and still there was need of further Divine Interpositions. And through a long course of years they were exercised with various dispensations, according as they did or did not adhere to the worship of God. When they clave unto the Lord, they were prosperous and triumphant; when they forsook him, and followed strange gods, they were in great distress, in servitude, and captivity; till by repeated calamities, and signal deliverances, accompanied with the clearer light, and more rational convictions, which, at length, they were prepared to receive from their prophets, they were at last weaned from idolatry,

latry, after the Babylonish captivity, about 955 years after their return out of *Egypt*; and never relapsed into it again*.

All this was necessary, and, in consistence with human agency, and the gradual improvements of mankind, was the properest method to preserve the knowledge of the true God in the world, not only in that single nation, but in all the nations of the earth. For the dispensation among the *Jews*, like a piece of leaven, which leaveneth the whole mass, was intended for the benefit of all mankind; as by this means they became examples and instructors, while they remained in their own country, to all their neighbours; and when in captivity, or dispersion, as they carried with them the knowledge of God into the countries where they were dispersed; till the nations should, by this and other means of improvement, be prepared to receive the clearest revelation of the true God, and of eternal life by the *Messiah*. Which was the great end and design of the scheme which we have been considering.

And now, the more a thinking man revolves in his mind this train of affairs, and sees how one nation are led, step by step, as their capacities would admit, to a sense of the pre-eminence and sovereignty of the true God, in order to be set apart as the repository of his sacred laws and religion, till they and all mankind are fit for the reception of them in a more simple, clear, and extensive form, under the Gospel, the more he will confess and admire the signatures of wisdom and goodness that appear through the whole and every part of the economy.

There is one thing deserves particular attention, I mean, the spirit and behaviour of the *Israelites* in the wilderness. A very remarkable instance of the wretched effects of servitude upon the human soul. They had been slaves to the *Egyptians* for about 140 years; their spirits were debased, their judgments weak, their sense of God and religion very low: they were very defective in attention, gratitude, generosity; full of distrust and uneasy suspicions; complaining and murmuring under the most astonishing displays of Divine Power and Goodness, as if still under the frowns and scourges of their unjust task-masters; could scarce raise their thoughts to prospects the most pleasing and joyous; knew not how to value the blessings of liberty; of a taste so mean and illiberal, that the flesh and fish, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, onions and garlick, and such good doings in *Egypt*, weighed more with them than bread from heaven, and all the Divine assurances and demonstrations that they should be raised to the noblest privileges, the highest honour and felicity, as a peculiar treasure to God, above all people in the world. *Num. xi. 4, 5, 6.*

In short, nothing would do; the ill qualities of slavery were engrained in their hearts; a groveling, thoughtless, sturdy, dastardly spirit fatigued the Divine Patience, counteracted and defeated all his wise and beneficent measures; they could not be worked up to that sense of God,

* Reckoning by the age of man, the world was then 34 years old; for the *Jews* returned from the *Babylonish* captivity about the year of the world 3468.

that esteem of his highest favours, that gratitude and generous dutifulness, that magnanimity of spirit, which were necessary to their conquering and enjoying the promised land. And therefore the wisdom of God determined they should not attempt the possession of it, till that generation of slaves, namely, all above 20 years of age, were dead and buried. However, this did not lie out of the Divine plan. It served a great purpose, namely, to warn that, and all future ages of the church, both *Jewish* and Christian, that if they despise and abuse the goodness of God, and the noble privileges and prospects they enjoy, they shall forfeit the benefit of them. And the Apostle applieth it to this very important use, with great force and propriety, in the epistle to the *Hebrews*, chap. ii. ver. 15, to the end, and chap. iv. ver. 1—12.

Thus, for a general view of this noble scheme. The nature and excellency of it will stand in a stronger light, if we examine the particular privileges and honours conferred upon this distinguished nation, their tendency to promote piety and virtue, and the relation they bear to the state of things under the Gospel. For this part of the subject we must turn to my *Key to the Apostolic Writings*.

C H A P. XXVIII.

Of the Jewish RITUAL, or Ceremonial LAW.

WE must now turn back to the *Mosaic* Constitution; which consisted, 1. Of political and judicial Laws. For which consult Mr. LOWMAN on *The Civil Government of the Hebrews*. 2. Of moral precepts, such as the ten commandments. 3. Of Rites and Ceremonies, such as circumcision, sacrifices, washings, purifications, the use of certain garments, &c. and divers Rites used by the priests in the tabernacle. For a particular account of which, consult Mr. LOWMAN on *the Ritual of the Hebrew Worship*. I shall only observe in general, that the design of those Ceremonies, justly explained, was to convey religious and moral instructions, as well as the express precepts.

Hieroglyphics, which represent the sense of the mind, by outward figures, or actions, were the first and most ancient literature. So the government of the world by Divine Providence, and its extraordinary interposition in favour of good men, is represented by a ladder standing upon the earth, and reaching to heaven, with the angels ascending and descending on it, to receive and execute orders from God above, who ruleth over all. *Gen. xxviii. 12, 13*. In the style of this *Hieroglyphic* our Lord speaks, *John i. 51*. Hereafter shall you see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man, as upon Jacob; meaning, you shall see an extraordinary Divine Interposition working in

my favour, by many miraculous operations. [Dr. BENSON.] The exaltation of *Joseph* above the rest of the family, was represented by the Hieroglyphic of his sheaf standing upright, and the eleven sheaves of his brothers standing round about and bowing to it; as also of the sun, moon, and eleven stars, making obeisance to him. *Gen.* xxxvii. 7, 9. The tribe of *Judah* is represented by a young lion; *Issachar*, by a strong ass; *Dan*, by a serpent lurking in the road; *Naphtali*, by a hind; *Joseph*, by a fruitful bough; *Benjamin*, by a ravening wolf. *Gen.* xlix. 9, 14, &c. A rod or staff, as it is an instrument of striking or beating down, is the Hieroglyphic of power exerted in conquering, punishing, ruling, *Isaiah* x. 5, 24; and of dominion and authority, *Psal.* cx. 2; and as such, is continued to this day, under the name of a sceptre. With such a rod *Moses* and *Aaron* appeared before *Pharaoh*, as hieroglyphically representing the power and authority of God, in whose name they demanded the release of the *Israelites*. *Exod.* vii. 15. And thus they appeared as men of learning, and acted agreeably to the literature of the age. A horn represented temporal power and dominion. *1 Sam.* ii. 10. *1 Kin.* xxii. 11. *Psal.* lxxxix. 24. A yoke, such as slaves carried upon their shoulders, servitude, or bondage. *Gen.* xxvii. 37, 40. *Jer.* xxvii. 2, 6. xxviii. 10.

This may serve to explain the nature of hieroglyphics; a sort of language the *Jews* were then accustomed to, being the learning of that age, which they would understand much better than abstract reasonings about moral truths and duties. We may therefore, on this account, well admit, that the Rites and Ceremonies of their religious institution were hieroglyphic, and intended by external representations to give them useful instructions in true religion and real goodness. If we consult the Prophets and Apostles, who were well acquainted with their meaning, we shall find so much evidence of the moral and spiritual intention of so many, as may induce us to believe, this was the sense and spirit of all the rest.

They were enjoined various and frequent ablutions, or washings with water; the common use of which is to discharge the body from all dirt and filth, and to keep it clean. This was a very easy representation of purity of mind, or of an heart purged from the filth of sin. And so the Prophets understood it. *Psal.* li. 2. *Wash me from mine iniquity.* *Ver.* 7. *Wash me, and I shall be clean.* *Isai.* i. 16. *Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean, put away the evil of your doings.*—*Cease to do evil, learn to do well.* *Jer.* iv. 14. *Acts* xxii. 16. *Heb.* x. 22. *Rev.* i. 5. Anointing with oil, or ointment, by which the head was beautified, and the countenance exhilarated, had the signification of honour, joy, holiness, and inspiration, *Psal.* xlv. 7. *Acts* x. 38. The priests officiated in garments of fine linen, *Exod.* xxxix. 27; meaning, that the priests should be clothed, or have their souls adorned with righteousness. *Psal.* cxxxii. 9. *For the fine linen is the righteousness of Saints.* *Rev.* xix. 8. Burning of incense, whose smoke riseth up with a pleasant smell, was an hieroglyphic representation of acceptable prayer. *Psal.* cxli. 2. *Luke* i. 10. *Rev.* viii. 3, 4. Circumcision had relation to the heart and soul, or to the retrenching all inordinate affections and inclinations. *Lev.* xxvi. 41. *Deut.* x. 12—17. xxx. 6. *Jer.* iv. 4. *Rom.* ii. 29. The sprinkling of blood, and

and of the water of separation, (*Num. xix. 13, 19.*) was hieroglyphic, and had a moral signification. See *Heb. ix. 13, 14. x. 22. xii. 24. 1 Pet. i. 2.* And so had the muzzled mouth of the ox, *Deut. xxv. 4.* compared with *1 Cor. ix. 9, 10. 1 Tim. v. 17, 18.*

Some may have indulged too much to imagination, and found more mysteries in the Hebrew Ritual than were really designed; but these instances, explained by authentic evidence, may convince us, that the whole had a rational and spiritual meaning. And as we are taught in the Gospel every thing relating to virtue and religion in the plainest manner, we need not give ourselves much trouble about discovering the meaning of the other Rites, which are not explained by Prophets and Apostles. Only the affair of sacrifices is so often alluded to in the New Testament, and seems to have such respect to the sacrifice of our Lord, that it demands a more particular examination. [Turn to the *Scripture-Doctrine of Atonement.*]

C H A P. XXIX.

The SCRIPTURE-CHRONOLOGY from the EXODUS to the Founding of SOLOMON'S Temple.

THIS space of time was 480 years; as appears from *1 Kings, vi. 1.* which is made out, in the best manner I have yet seen, as follows:

| Years before Christ. | | Years. | Proofs. |
|----------------------|--|--------|--|
| 1451 | From the <i>Exodus</i> to the death of <i>Moses</i> , and succession of <i>Joshua</i> . Note— <i>Moses</i> was 40 years old, when he fled out of <i>Egypt</i> , <i>Acts vii. 23.</i> He was 40 years with <i>Jethro</i> , <i>Exod. vii. 7.</i> and 40 years in the wilderness with the <i>Israelites</i> . Therefore, he was 120 when he died. <i>Deut. xxxiv. 7.</i> | 40 | <i>Exod. vii. 7.</i> <i>Acts vii. 30.</i> |
| 1426 | From the succession of <i>Joshua</i> to his death. Note—after the death of <i>Joshua</i> the <i>Israelites</i> fell into idolatry, <i>Judg. ii. 7, &c.</i> And in those licentious | 25 | <i>Josephus.</i> |
| | H 3 times, | | |

Years before
Christ.

Years.

Proofs.

times, about the year before Christ 1398, the events recorded in the xviith and xviiiith chapters of the book of *Judges*, by which idolatry was introduced into the tribe of *Ephraim*, and by that means propagated among the *Danites*, might happen. For it was in the times when *there was no king in Israel*. And in the same unhappy period fell out, most probably, the war of the eleven tribes against *Benjamin*, of which we read *Judg.* xix. xx. xxi. chapters. For *Phineas*, the son of *Eleazar*, (*Josh.* xxiv. 33. 1 *Chron.* vi. 4.) who after the death of *Joshua* succeeded his father, about the year before Christ 1402, was then high-priest, *Judg.* xx. 28. And in those days also *there was no king in Israel*, chap. xxi. 25. which shews it was in the same times with the preceding events.

1391 From the death of *Joshua* to the bondage of East-*Israel* under *Cushan*.

1383 To their deliverance by *Othniel*.

1343 To the bondage of East-*Israel* under *Eglon*, king of *Moab*.

1325 To their deliverance by *Ehud*.

[After which, that part of *Israel* had rest for 80 years, *Judg.* iii. 30.] Note — It may probably be supposed, that scarce any of the judges ruled over the whole country of *Israel*, but some in one part, and some in another; so that, at the same time, there might be several judges in several parts of the land; and

35

Judg. iii. 8.

8

. . 9, 10, 11.

40

. . 12, 13, 14.

18

. . . 15—30.

Years before
Christ.

Years.

Proofs.

| | | | |
|------|--|----|----------------------------|
| | and peace and liberty in one part, when there was war and slavery in another. The eastern part, that had shaken off the yoke of <i>Moab</i> , had rest 80 years; but, in the mean while, the <i>Philistines</i> invaded the western parts, and were repulsed by <i>Shamgar</i> , <i>Judg.</i> iii. 31. Afterward <i>Jabin</i> afflicted the northern tribes, chap. iv. 2. while the eastern parts still remained in peace. See Bp. PATRICK on <i>Judg.</i> xi. 26. | | |
| 1285 | To the deliverance of North- <i>Israel</i> from <i>Jabin</i> , by <i>Deborah</i> and <i>Baruch</i> . [After which that part of the land had rest 40 years. <i>Judg.</i> v. 31.] | 40 | Authority of Chronologers. |
| 1245 | To the bondage of North and East <i>Israel</i> under the <i>Midianites</i> , for 7 years. Note—In some of those 7 years, probably, <i>Elimelech</i> removed into the land of <i>Moab</i> , by reason of the famine, occasioned by the depredations of the <i>Midianites</i> , <i>Ruth</i> i. 1, 2. <i>Judg.</i> vi. 4. | 40 | <i>Judg.</i> vi. 1. |
| 1238 | To their deliverance by <i>Gideon</i> . | 7 | <i>Jud.</i> vi. 1, &c. |
| 1199 | To <i>Abimelech's</i> usurpation, 40 years, or 39 complete. | 39 | . . . viii. 28. |
| 1196 | To <i>Tola</i> , judge over North and East <i>Israel</i> . | 3 | . . . ix. 22. |
| 1173 | To <i>Jair</i> , judge over North and East <i>Israel</i> . Note—While <i>Jair</i> was judge, North and East <i>Israel</i> were in bondage to the <i>Ammonites</i> 18 years, <i>Judg.</i> x. 8. At the same time with <i>Jair</i> , <i>Eli</i> began to judge South and West <i>Israel</i> 40 years, 1 <i>Sam.</i> iv. 18; all which time that part of <i>Israel</i> was oppressed by the <i>Philistines</i> , | 23 | . . . x. 1, 2. |

| Years before Christ. | | Years. | Proofs. |
|-------------------------|---|--------|-----------------------|
| | Judg. xiii. 1. In the first of those forty years of <i>Eli</i> , which was also the first year of <i>Fair</i> , <i>Samson</i> might be born; who lived 40 years, and judged <i>West-Israel</i> , (while <i>Eli</i> also was judge there, and while that part of the country was under the <i>Philistines</i> ,) 20 years, <i>Judg.</i> xv. 20. [<i>Eli</i> judging in civil affairs; <i>Samson</i> by harassing the <i>Philistines</i> . <i>USHER</i> .] About the 13th year of <i>Eli</i> , before <i>Christ</i> 1160, <i>Samuel</i> might be born. | | |
| 1152 | From <i>Fair</i> to <i>Jephthah</i> , who delivered North and East <i>Israel</i> from the <i>Ammonites</i> , 22, or 21 complete years. | 21 | <i>Judg.</i> x. 3. |
| 1147 | From <i>Jephthah</i> to <i>Ibzan</i> , over North and East <i>Israel</i> , six, or five complete years. | 5 | . . . xii. 7. |
| 1140 | From <i>Ibzan</i> to his successor <i>Elon</i> , in North and East- <i>Israel</i> . | 7 | 9. |
| 1135 | About the fifth year of <i>Elon</i> , <i>Samuel</i> was publicly known to be a Prophet, 1 <i>Sam.</i> iii. | | |
| 1133 | 20. iv. 1. About the seventh of <i>Elon</i> , <i>Samson</i> pulled down the temple, <i>Judg.</i> xvi. 30. and destroyed great numbers of the <i>Philistines</i> . <i>USHER</i> thinks that this calamity might encourage the South and West <i>Israelites</i> to give them battle, 1 <i>Sam.</i> iv. 1, &c. | | |
| 1130 | From <i>Elon</i> to <i>Abdon</i> , over North and East <i>Israel</i> . | 10 | <i>Judg.</i> xii. 11. |
| 1122 | From <i>Abdon</i> to his successor <i>Samuel</i> , who now was also judge over North and East <i>Israel</i> , as he had been before over South and West <i>Israel</i> , 1 <i>Sam.</i> vii. 15, 16, 17. pro- | | |

| Years before Christ. | | Years. | Proofs. |
|-------------------------|---|--------|------------------------|
| | 17. probably, from the time that he was publicly known to be a Prophet. | 8 | <i>Judg. xii. 14.</i> |
| 1094 | From <i>Samuel</i> to king <i>Saul</i> . | 28 | <i>Chronologers</i> |
| 1054 | From <i>Saul</i> to <i>David</i> . | 40 | <i>Acts xiii. 21.</i> |
| 1014 | From <i>David</i> to <i>Solomon</i> . | 40 | <i>1 Kings ii. 11.</i> |
| | From <i>Solomon</i> to the founding of the temple, four, or three complete years. | 3 | <i>. . . vi. 1.</i> |

In all . . . 480 *1 Kings vi. 1.*

C H A P. XXX.

Authors within the Period from the EXODUS to the Founding of SOLOMON'S Temple.

ABOUT the beginning of this Period books began to be written; and it hath furnished the world with the noblest productions, both in history, poetry, and the instructive kind.

The Book of JOB.

If *Job* wrote his own book; or if it was written by *Elibu*, one of the interlocutors, as some gather from *chap. xxxii. 10, 15, &c.* where he speaks in the language of the writer of the Book; and if *Moses* found it when he was with *Jethro* in *Midian*, and transcribed it, adding the historical parts at the beginning and the end; then this Book of *Job* is earlier than this Period, and the oldest Book in the world. And, as it is worthy of the highest antiquity, any of these suppositions is far more probable than theirs who imagine it was written in a later age, about the time of the *Babylonish* captivity.

The PENTATEUCH.

THAT *Moses* wrote the *Pentateuch*, or fivefold volume, (from *πεντε*, *quinque*, and *τευχος*, *volumen*, *liber*, (containing the five books in the Bible, we have the same reason to believe, as we have that *Homer* wrote the

the *Iliad*; namely, the consent of all the learned in all ages. The first of these books is *Genesis*, בראשית containing the only history of the world from the creation down to *Jacob's* removing into *Egypt*, for 2298 years. 2. *Exodus*, שמות is the history of the departure of the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, and of the erecting and furnishing of the tabernacle. 3. *Leviticus*, ויקרא in which are the laws, ceremonies, and sacrifices of the Jewish religion, and what particularly related to the *Levites*. 4. *Numbers*, במדבר begins with the numbering of the *Israelites*; after which several laws and remarkable events are recorded. 5. *Deuteronomy*, דברים is a repetition and an abridgement of the law, with exhortations and motives to the observance of it.

The Book of JOSHUA.

JOSHUA probably wrote the last chapter of *Deuteronomy*, and the Book of *Joshua*, containing an account of his own acts, in conquering and dividing the land of *Canaan*; and *Phineas*, the high priest, might add the five last verses relating to the death of *Joshua*, and of his father *Eleazar* the high-priest.

The Book of JUDGES,

WAS certainly written before the second book of *Samuel*; compare 2 *Sam.* xi. 21. with *Judg.* ix. 53; and before *David* had taken *Jerusalem*, 2 *Sam.* v. 6. *Judg.* i. 21. *Samuel*, the Prophet, or Seer, the last of the Judges, was an historian, 1 *Chron.* xxix. 29. and probably wrote this Book of *Judges*; in which we read the great efficacy of religion to make a nation happy, and the dismal calamities which impiety brings along with it. St. *Paul* (*Heb.* xi. 32.) points out some examples of heroic, and surprisingly successful faith in *Gideon*, *Barak*, *Samson*, and *Jephthah*, whose history is recorded in this Book. It consists of two parts, the one containing the history of the Judges, from *Othniel* to *Samuel*, which part ends with the xvth chapter; the other, containing several memorable actions, performed not long after the death of *Joshua*, is thrown to the end of the Book, that it might not interrupt the thread the history.

The Book of RUTH.

RUTH may be considered as an appendage to the book of *Judges*, and brings down the history to the times of *Samuel*, who probably was the author of it, and draws the lineage of *Judah* down to *David*. chap. iv. 18. Which makes it not unlikely, that it was written after *David* was anointed by *Samuel*. 1 *Sam.* xvi. 13.

Here it may not be improper to observe, that *Samuel* was not only an author, but otherwise seems to have been a great promoter of literature and religion. We never read of the companies or colleges of Prophets till

till this time; and therefore, probably, he erected them. They were seminaries for the instruction of youth in the knowledge of the law, and for training them up in the exercises of piety; particularly in the singing of sacred hymns, in concert with instrumental music. This, in the language of those times, was prophesying, 1 Sam. x. 5. 1 Chron. xxv. 1, 2, 3, 7. They were not, strictly speaking, all of them *Prophets*; but upon some of them God bestowed the spirit of prophecy, or of predicting future events, 2 Kings ii. 3. And we may suppose, that most of the Prophets, properly so called, came out of those schools. *Amos* excepts himself, chap. vii. 14.—*I was no Prophet, neither was I a Prophet's son*, i. e. Disciple; for the scholars were called *the sons of the Prophets*. At their head, as governor, they had some venerable truly-inspired Prophet, who was called their *father*. 1 Sam. x. 12. 2 Kings ii. 12. *Samuel* was one, and perhaps the first of those *fathers*, or governors. 1 Sam. xix. 20. *Elijah* was another. 2 Kings ii. 12. And *Elisha* succeeded him in this office. 2 Kings iv. 38. *Elisha* came to *Gilgal*—and the sons of the Prophets were sitting before him. The master, or father, sat above; and the scholars below, before him, at his feet. 2 Kings ii. 3. *Knowest thou that the Lord will take away thy master from thy head?* or from the seat, where he sits above thy head—See *Acts* xxii. 3. They lived together in society, 2 Kings vi. 1; and when they had done their lectures, and religious exercises, were wont to eat together with their masters. 2 Kings iv. 38, &c. This institution had a manifest tendency to advance religion and learning.

I. II. SAMUEL.

1 SAMUEL was wrote before 1 Kings. 1 Kings ii. 17. 1 Sam. ii. 31, 35, compared; and it is not unreasonably supposed, that *Samuel* wrote the first 24 chapters; and that, after his death, the history of *David* was continued in the first and second Books of *Samuel* by the Prophets *Gad* and *Nathan*. 1 Chron. xxix. 29.

I. II. KINGS.

THESE Books contain the history of the kings of *Judah* and *Israel*, from *Solomon* to the captivity in *Babylon*, for the space of 423 years. In this Period were several historiographers; for we read of the book of the *Acts of Solomon*, 1 Kings xi. 41. which *Acts of Solomon* were recorded in the Book of *Nathan the Prophet*, and in the Prophecy of *Abijah the Shilonite*, and in the Visions of *Iddo the Seer*. 2 Chron. ix. 29. Which *Iddo* was employed, together with *Shemaiah the Prophet*, in writing the *Acts of Rehoboam*. 2 Chron. xii. 15. We also read of the book of *Jehu*, the Prophet, relating the *Acts of king Jehoshaphat*. 2 Chron. xx. 34. 1 Kings xvi. 1. And *Isaiah*, the Prophet, wrote the *Acts of king Uzziah*, 2 Chron. xxvi. 22; and also of king *Hezekiah*, 2 Chron. xxxii. 32. And it is highly probable, that he wrote the history of the two intermediate kings

kings *Jotham* and *Abaz*, in whose reigns he lived. *Isai. i. 1.* And, we may well suppose, all these histories, added one to another, make the two Books of *Kings*.

Note—No writer of the history of the kings of *Judah* or *Israel* is any where expressly named; but his title is either given him as a Prophet, or it appears from some other part of Scripture that he was a Prophet. This quality of the writer was given to draw from us a proportionable respect, and make us receive the history with the reverence which is its due. The Prophets were the *Jewish* historians; therefore to the historical books, *Joshua*, *Judges*, *I. II. Samuel*, *I. II. Kings*, they give the title of נביאים ראשונים the former Prophets; as they give the title of נביאים אחרונים the latter Prophets, to *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, &c.

The Book of PSALMS,

Was composed by several authors, but chiefly by king *David*. *Moses* composed the xth Psalm, when God had shortened the lives of the *Israelites* in the wilderness, as a punishment for their unbelief. The cxxxviii Psalm was indited soon after their transportation to the land of *Babylon*, and captivity there, and the cxxvith upon their return out of it. Others were made upon other occasions; as may be seen in their titles, (although those are not supposed to be of the same authority with the text) or collected from the sense and scope of the Psalm. For which Bp. *PATRICK*'s Paraphrase may be consulted.

The Book of Psalms is divided into five parts. The first reaches to the end of the xliith Psalm; the second, to the end of the lxxiith Psalm; the third, to the end of the lxxxixth; the fourth, to the end of the cvith; and the fifth part, to the end of the whole.

It is a collection of divine odes, sublime and elegant, far beyond all human compositions; consisting of the loftiest celebrations of the Divine Praises, the most lively and fervent devotions of meditation, thanksgiving, prayer and supplication, faith, hope, and trust in God in every condition, and the most excellent instructions in every branch of piety and virtue. And the frequent reading of it hath a strong tendency to establish in our minds the principles of true wisdom, even every right disposition towards God and man; and that purity of heart, and serenity of mind, which is a fund of comfort and joy in the ways of God, and will animate us to walk in them with steadiness and delight.

Moses was the first that composed sacred hymns, that we read of, *Exod. xv.* *Deborah* the next, *Judg. v.* and then *Hannah*, *1 Sam. ii.* But *David*, an admirable artist in music, (*1 Sam. xvi. 18.* *Amos vi. 5.*) carried divine poetry and psalmody to its perfection; and therefore is called the sweet Psalmist of *Israel*. *2 Sam. xxiii. 1.* He, doubtless by Divine Authority, appointed the singing of psalms by a select company of skilful persons, in the solemn worship of the tabernacle, *1 Chron. vi. 31. xvi. 4—8.* which *Solomon* continued in the temple, *2 Chron. v. 12, 13.* And so did *Ezra*, as soon as the foundation of the second temple was laid, *Ezra. iii. 10, 11.* Hence the people became well acquainted with the songs of *Sion*; and having committed them to memory, were famous

famous for melodious singing among the neighbouring countries. *Psal.* cxxxvii. 3. And the continuance of this branch of divine worship is confirmed by the practice of our Lord, and the instructions of the Apostle. *Mat.* xxvi. 30. *Mark* xiv. 26. *Ephes.* v. 19. *Col.* iii. 16. See also *Rev.* v. 9. xiv. 1, 2, 3. Psalm-singing is a part of Christian worship, which ought to be supported, encouraged, and performed in the most skilful and harmonious manner.

These are the books that were written before the founding of *Solomon's Temple*.

C H A P. XXXI.

From the Founding of SOLOMON'S Temple, till the Destruction of it by NEBUCHADNEZZAR, 423 Years.

RULES for calculating and adjusting the Chronology of this Period.

THE Chronology is here carried on by the sacred Historians in a double series of succeeding kings; one in the kingdom of *Judah*, the other in the kingdom of *Israel*; the year of the reign of every king of *Judah* being mentioned, in which any king of *Israel* began his reign; and *vice versa*. Therefore,

I. To be able to form a true judgment of the Chronology, it is necessary that we draw up two columns, one of the kings of *Judah*, and the other of the kings of *Israel*, in such manner, that the years of their several reigns may be set exactly over-against each other; together with the texts which prove the order of succession, and the years of the several reigns. Thus the two columns will be a check upon each other; and the general rule will be,

II. So to adjust the corresponding numbers of years in both the columns, as that they may be reduced to a consistency. Otherwise, the calculation cannot be just and true. Here lies the difficulty; and in order to surmount it some allowance must be made. As,

III. That Successors may be supposed sometimes to reign with their fathers, when the consistency of the two lists of kings cannot otherwise be made out. Thus it is certain, that *Solomon* was anointed king by order of his father *David*. 1 *Kings* i. 34. And *Jehoram* did begin to reign while his father *Jehoshaphat* was alive. 2 *Kings* viii. 16.

IV. The years of reigns is delivered in full sums, without taking notice of the odd parts of a year, either at the beginning, or at the end of a reign. Therefore, to bring the two lists to an agreement, it may reasonably be supposed, that, for instance, 12 years (or the 12th year) are put down, when only eleven complete years are intended. So 2 *Kings* xviii. 9, 10, it is said, that *Salmanser* laid siege to *Samaria* in the fourth year

year of *Hezekiah's* reign, and, after a siege of three years, took it in the sixth year of *Hezekiah*. Hence it appears, that the three years of the siege are not to be understood of three full years, but only of two such years; the siege beginning in the middle, suppose, of *Hezekiah's* fourth year, continuing the whole fifth year, and ending in some part of the sixth year. It is therefore plain that, according to the style of the sacred historians, one whole year and two parts of two years, one before, and another after that year, may be called three years.

V. In a turbulent state of things, an *inter-regnum* may be allowed, where consistency cannot be preserved without it.

VI. To find the year before Christ, (or before A. D.) in which any reign began, subtract the years of the preceding reign from that year before A. D. in which the preceding reign began. To find the year of the world, (or A. M.) subtract the year before A. D. from 4004, which is the A. M. in which our Lord was born, according to Archbishop USHER, who is generally followed by our Chronologers. Further, from 4714, the year of the *Julian Period*, corresponding to A. M. 4004, subtract the year before A. D. and it will give the year of the *Julian Period*. E. g. To know what year before A. D. *Jehoshaphat* began to reign, subtract 41, the years of his father *Asa's* reign, from the year before A. D. 955, when *Asa* began to reign, and the remainder will give 914, the year before A. D. when *Jehoshaphat* began to reign. Subtract the year 914 from 4004, and it will give 3090, the A. M. of the same event. Subtract 914 from 4714, and it will give 3800, the year of the *Julian Period* when *Jehoshaphat* began to reign.

From the Founding of Solomon's Temple till the Destruction of it by NEBUCHADNEZZAR, 423 Years.

| <i>Yrs. bef. A. D.</i> | <i>Yrs. of Reigns</i> | <i>Kings of J U D A H</i> | <i>Proofs</i> | <i>Kings of I S R A E L</i> | <i>Yrs. of Reigns</i> | <i>Yrs. bef. A. D.</i> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1011 | 36 | SOLOMON (a) | 1 Kin. vi. 37, 38. | JEREBOAM I. | 22 | 1011 |
| 975 | 17 | REHOBAM | — xiv. 20, 21. | 18. (b) | | 975 |
| 958 | 3 | ABIJAM | — xv. 2, 1. | 20. | | 958 |
| 955 | 41 | ASA | — xv. 10, 9. | NADAB (c) | 1 | 955 |
| 953 | | | — xv. 25. | BAASHA (d) | 23 | 953 |
| 952 | | | — xv. 28, 33 | ELAH (e) | 1 | 952 |
| 929 | | | — xvi. 8. | ZIMRI | 7 days | 929 |
| 928 | | | — xvi. 10, 15. | OMRI (g) | 11 | 928 |
| 928 | | | 27 (f) — xvi. 23. | | | 928 |

(a) *Solomon* laid the foundation of the Temple in the 4th year of his reign; and after that year he reigned 36 years.

(b) 17th complete.

(c) *Nadab* reigned two parts of 2 years, which together made 1 year.

(d) The latter part of *Baasha's* first year is laid to *Nadab's* second year.

(e) Part of 2 years, or 1 complete.

(f) To preserve a consistency with the Chronology of the kings of *Israel*, we must suppose, that *Omri* reigned with *Tibni* 4 years, 1 *Kings* xvi. 21, 22, beginning in the 27th year of *Asa*: that after *Tibni's* death he reigned alone 8 years, or 7 complete, beginning at the 31st year of *Asa*: For the text, 1 *Kings* xvi. 22, 23. may be read—*so Tibni died, and Omri reigned alone in the 31st year of Asa king of Judah. Omri reigned in all twelve years: in Tirzah he reigned six years.*

(g) Eleven years complete. When it is said that he reigned twelve years, part of a year is counted for a whole year.

| <i>Yrs. bef. A. D.</i> | <i>Yrs. of Reigns</i> | <i>Kings of JUDAH</i> | <i>Proofs</i> | <i>Kings of ISRAEL</i> | <i>Yrs. of Reigns</i> | <i>Yrs. bef. A. D.</i> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 917 | | 38 | 1 <i>Kin.</i> xvi. 29. | AHAB (<i>b</i>) | 20 | 917 |
| 914 | 25 | JEHOSAPHAT | — xxii. 42, 41. | 4 (<i>i</i>) | | 914 |
| 910 | | [<i>Troy</i> taken (<i>l</i>)] | — xvii. 1. | [<i>Elijah</i> (<i>k</i>)] | | 910 |
| 904 | | 17 | — xxii. 51. | AHAZIAH (<i>m</i>) | 1 | 897 |
| 897 | | 18 | 2 <i>Kin.</i> iii. 1. | JEHORAM (<i>n</i>) | 11 | 896 |
| 896 | | | [— i. 17. ii. 1. &c. iii. 1] | <i>Elijah</i> translated, <i>Elisha</i> succeeds him.] | | 896 |
| 889 | 4 | JEHORAM (<i>o</i>) | — viii. 16. | | | |
| 885 | 1 | AHAZIAH | — viii. 26, 25. | 5 | | 885 |
| 884 | 6 | ATHALIAH | — xi. 3. | 12 (<i>p</i>) | 28 | 884 |
| | | | — x. 36. | JEHU | | |
| 878 | 40 | JOASH (<i>q</i>) | — xii. 1. | 7 (<i>r</i>) | | 878 |
| 870 | | [<i>Hesiod</i> and <i>Homer</i> *] | | | | |
| 856 | | 22 (<i>s</i>) | — xiii. 1. | JEHOAHAZ | 17 | 856 |

- (*b*) *Abab* reigned but twenty years complete. See the corresponding part of the opposite column.
 (*i*) This was the third year complete.
 (*l*) According to Sir ISAAC NEWTON.
 (*n*) Or *Jeram*, he reigned eleven years complete.
 (*p*) Eleven years complete.
 (*r*) The sixth year complete.
 (*s*) Twenty-second complete.
 (*k*) About this time *Elijah*, the Prophet, appeared.
 (*m*) *Abaziah* reigned one year with his father, and one year alone.
 (*o*) Or *Jeram*. It is supposed he reigned four years with his father.
 (*q*) Or *Jehoasaph*.
 According to Sir ISAAC NEWTON.

| Yrs. bef. A. D. | Yrs. of Reigns | Kings of J U D A H | Proofs | Kings of I S R A E L | Yrs. of Reigns | Yrs. bef. A. D. |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 839 | | 37 (t) | 2 Kin. xiii. 10. | JEOASH (u) | 14 | 839 |
| | | | — xiii. 14. | [<i>Elishab dieth.</i>] | | 839 |
| 839 | 29 | AMAZIAH | — xiv. 2, 1. | 2 (x) | | 839 |
| 825 | | 15 (y) | — xiv. 23. | JEROBOAM II. | 41 | 825 |
| 812 | | | — xiv. 25. | [<i>Jonab (z)</i>] | | 812 |
| 810 | 52 | AZARIAH (a) | — xv. 2, 1. | 27 (b) | | |
| 800 | | [<i>Joel prophesied.</i>] | | | | |

(t) The thirty-seventh of *Joash* of *Judah* is the year in which *Joash* of *Israel* began to reign with his father; with whom he is supposed to reign two years. But those two years are not taken into the account, which must be reckoned from the fortieth, or thirtieth year complete, when *Joash* of *Israel* reigned alone.

(u) Or *Joash*. He reigned two years with his father, in all sixteen years.

(x) Those two years he reigned with his father; and therefore they are not taken in.

(y) Fourteen years complete.

(z) *Jonab*, in his younger days, perhaps about twenty-eight, might begin to prophesy about this time.

(a) Or *Uzziah*, 2 *Chron.* xxvi. i. *Isai.* i. vi. i. *Amos* i. i.

(b) *Amaziah* reigned twenty-nine years, namely, fourteen years before *Jeroboam* II. began to reign, and fifteen years after he began to reign. How then could his son *Azariah*, or *Uzziah*, succeed him in the twenty-seventh year of *Jeroboam* II, when *Jeroboam* had reigned but fifteen years when *Amaziah* died? *Ans.* If *Azariah* was sixteen, in the twenty-seventh of *Jeroboam* (2 *Kings* xv. 2.) then he was born in the eleventh year of *Jeroboam*, and so was but a minor of four years old in the fifteenth of *Jeroboam*, when his father *Amaziah* died. It may therefore be supposed, that he was not inaugurated, or crowned king, till twelve years after, when he was sixteen years of age, in the twenty-seventh of *Jeroboam*: the government, in the mean while, being in the hands of a regency. But to preserve the truth of the Chronology, the twelve years of his minority are included in the fifty-two years which he is said to have reigned; which twelve years are to be deducted out of the twenty-seven of *Jeroboam*'s reign; and so he will be considered as succeeding his father in the fifteenth year of *Jeroboam*. Thus all will stand right. As the regency governed and tutored the young king exceeding well, the people were in no haste to have him crowned.

| <i>Yrs. bef. A. D.</i> | <i>Yrs. of Reigns</i> | <i>Kings of JUDAH</i> | <i>Proofs</i> | <i>Kings of ISRAEL</i> | <i>Yrs. of Reigns</i> | <i>Yrs. bef. A. D.</i> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--|--|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 784 | | | [<i>Amos</i> i. 1. [<i>Hosea</i> i. 1.] | <i>Amos</i> prophesied. <i>Hosea</i> prophesied. Interregnum | | 787 |
| 773 | | 38 (c) | 2 <i>Kin.</i> xv. 8. | ZECHARIAH | 11 | 785 |
| 772 | | 39 | — xv. 13. | SHALLUM | 6 months | 784 |
| 772 | | 39 | — xv. 17. | MENAHM | 1 month | 773 |
| | | | | [<i>Jonah</i> went to Nine- veh. (d)] | 10 | 772 |
| 761 | | 50 | — xv. 23. | PEKAIAH | 2 | 770 |
| 759 | | 52 | — xv. 27. | PEKAH | 20 | 762 |
| | | [<i>Isaiah</i> (e)] | <i>Isa.</i> i. i. vi. i. i.] | | | 760 |
| 758 (f) | 16 | JOTHAM | 2 <i>Kin.</i> xv. 33, 32. | | | 758 |
| 753 | | [<i>Micah</i> prophesied | <i>Micah</i> i. i.] | | | |
| 742 | 16 | AHAZ | 2 <i>Kin.</i> xvi. 2, 1. | | 17 (g) | 742 |

(c) Thirty-seven complete.

(d) About this time *Jonah*, advanced in years, might prophesy against *Nineveh*, in the reign of *Pul*, who soon after invaded the land of *Israel*, 2 *Kings* xv. 19; but it doth not appear, that he had any design to conquer it.(e) About this time *Isaiah* began to prophesy, *Isai.* i. i. and, it is supposed, continued to the latter end of *Hezekiah's* reign.(f) This number is found by subtracting 52, the years of *Azariah* or *Uzziah's* reign, from 810, which is the year before *Christ* when he began to reign.

(g) Sixteen complete.

| Yrs. bef. A. D. | Yrs. of Reigns | Kings of J U D A H | Proofs | Kings of I S R A E L | Yrs. of Reigns | Yrs. bef. A. D. |
|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------|--------------------|
| 740 | | | [1 Chron. v. 26. 2 Kin. xv. 29.] | I. Captivity of Israel by Tiglath. P.] | | |
| 738 | | | — xvii. 1. | Interregnum. | 8 | 738 |
| 730 | | | — xviii. 2, 1. | HOSEA. | 9 | 730 |
| 726 | | | — xviii. 9, &c. | II. Israel carried into cap- | | 726 |
| 721 | | | | tivity. (k) | | 721 |
| 720 | | | — xxi. 12. | | | 720 |
| 698 | | | [— xvii. 24. Ezra iv. 2.] | III. Captivity of Israel by E[arbadon*] | | |
| 677 | | | 2 Kin. xxi. 19. | | | |
| 643 | | | — xxii. 1. | | | |
| 641 | | | Fer. i. 2, 3. | | | |
| 628 | | | — xxv. 3. | | | |
| | | | [Nabum prophesied.] | | | |
| | | | MANASSEH 22 | | | |
| | | | 55 | | | |
| | | | AMON | | | |
| | | | 2 | | | |
| | | | JOSIAH | | | |
| | | | 3 | | | |
| | | | [Jeremiab began. | | | |
| | | | Habakkuk, Zephaniab (l)] | | | |

(b) Twenty-eight complete.

(k) King Hofseab and his people, the ten tribes, were now carried into Assyria by Sbalmaneser, king of Assyria, who dwelt at Nineveh.

* See page 144 in the note.

(l) In this year Jeremiab began, and continued till the eleventh year of Zedeiab, Jer. i. 2, 3. Habakkuk and Zephaniab were probably contemporaries with Jeremiab. See DE P A I D E A U X's Connect. at the year before A. D. 609.

| <i>Yrs. bef. A. D.</i> | <i>Yrs. of Reigns</i> | <i>Kings of JUDAH</i> | <i>Proofs</i> | <i>Kings of ISRAEL</i> |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|---|--|---|
| 610 | 3 months | JEHOAHAZ (m) | 2 <i>Kin.</i> xxiii. 31. | |
| 610 | 11 | JEHOIAKIM (n) | — xxiii. 36. | |
| 606 | | [<i>Daniel</i> carried to Baby- lon. (o)] | <i>Dan.</i> i. 1, 6. | I. Captivity of JUDAH. |
| 603 | | [<i>Daniel</i> interprets <i>Nebu- chadnezzar's</i> dream.] | — ii. 1.] | |
| 599 | 3 months | JEHOIACHIN (p) | 2 <i>Kin.</i> xxiv. 8. | |
| 599 | | [<i>Mordecai</i> and <i>Ezekiel</i> captives.] | <i>Ezth.</i> ii. 5, 6. <i>Ezek.</i> i. 1, 2.] | |
| 599 | 11 | ZEDEKIAH | 2 <i>Kin.</i> xxiv. 18. | II. Captivity of JUDAH. |
| 595 | | [<i>Ezekiel</i> had his first vi- sion.] | <i>Ezek.</i> i. 2.] | |
| 588 | | The Temple was demo- lished. | 2 <i>Kin.</i> xxxv. 2, 9. | III. Captivity of JUDAH, and of the remains of <i>Israel</i> . |
| 587 | | <i>Obadiab</i> prophesied against the <i>Edomites</i> , who cruelly assisted in the destruction of <i>Jerusalem</i> . | | |
| 569 | | <i>Nebuchadnezzar</i> distracted for 7 years together. <i>Dan.</i> iv. | | |
| 555 | | <i>Daniel</i> had his vision of the 4 empires. <i>Dan.</i> vii. | | |

(m) Or *Shallum*.(n) Hence began the seventy years captivity, foretold by *Jeremiah*, chap. xxv. 1, 12. xxix. 10. *Dan.* ix. 2.(p) Otherwise called *Coniah*, and *Jeconiah*. *Jer.* xxii. 24, &c. *Ezth.* ii. 6.

Yrs. bef.
A. D.

538 He interpreted the hand-writing on the wall, *Dan. v. 25.* and was cast into the lion's den, *Dan. vi.*
536 Cyrus restores the Jews, and puts an end to their 70 years captivity. *Ezra i. 1.* See the year before A. D. 606.

Zerubbabel was then governor, and *Jeshua* high priest. *Ezra iii. 2; 8 Hag. i. 1. Zech. iii. 1. iv. 6.*

535 Jews begin to rebuild *Jerusalem* and the temple. The *Samaritans* obstruct them. *Ezra iii. 1, &c. iv. 1.*

534 *Daniel's* last vision. *Dan. x. 11, 12.*

520 *Haggai* and *Zechariah* prophesy. *Ezra v. 1. Hag. i. 1. Zach. i. 1.*

515 The Temple rebuilt and dedicated. *Ezra vi. 15, 16.*

462 *Ahasuerus*, alias *Artaxerxes*, divorces *Vashti*, and afterwards marries *Esther*. *Esth. i. 1, &c.* See Dr. PRIDEAUX's
Connect. at the year before A. D. 465.

458 *Ezra* sent to be governor of *Judaea* by *Artaxerxes*. *Ezra vii.*

453 *Haman* plots the destruction of the Jews. *Esth. iii. 11.*

445 *Nebemiab* sent governor to *Judaea*, and rebuilds the walls of *Jerusalem*. *Neb. ii. 1, &c.*

444 *Ezra* is supposed to publish his edition of the Holy Scriptures.

433 *Nebemiab* goes from *Jerusalem* to the *Persian* court. *Neb. v. 14. xiii. 6.*

429 About this time *Malachi* prophesied, according to Dr. PRIDEAUX's Con. 428.

428 *Nebemiab* comes again to *Jerusalem* with a new commission. *Neb. xiii. 6.*

404 *Socrates* flourished.

296 *Simon the Just*, high priest of the *Jews*.

C H A P. XXXII.

The moral Causes of the Babylonish CAPTIVITY; and the Propriety of that Dispensation.

THE whole Jewish nation, both Judah and Israel, had all along a strong and strange propensity to idolatry, even after the erecting of the temple, and the establishing of the worship of God there, in the most grand and solemn manner. They erected altars to strange gods, frequented high-places and groves consecrated to idolatrous worship, and furnished them with idols and images for that purpose. 2 Chron. xiv. 3. 1 Kings xv. 11, 12, 13. And their morals were just as corrupt as their religion, even to the degree of sodomy itself. 1 Kings xv. 12.

What their peculiar temptations were, we know not. All the endeavours of good kings, and all the preaching of holy Prophets, sent by special commission from God, were ineffectual to produce a reformation. The pious king Hezekiah was zealous and active in rooting out idolatry: but Manasseh, his son and successor, restored it again in the highest and most flagitious degree of profaneness and iniquity, even beyond that of the dark and ignorant nations. 2 Kings xxi. 1—16. He built up again the high-places which Hezekiah his father had destroyed, &c. He was also a grievous persecutor of all that would not conform to his idolatrous establishments, and so shed innocent blood very much. Amon, his son, followed his bad example. Josiah, his grandson, vigorously attempted a reformation. 2 Kings xxiii. 24, 25. But the people never came heartily into it. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 14, &c. All the chief of the priests and the people transgressed very much, after all the abominations of the heathen, and polluted the house of the Lord, which he had hallowed in Jerusalem. And the Lord God of their fathers sent to them by his messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling-place; but they mocked the messengers of God, and despised his words, and misused his Prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against his people, till there was no remedy. Therefore he brought upon them the king of the Chaldeans, who slew their young men with the sword, in the house of their sanctuary, and had no compassion upon young men or maiden, old man, or him that stooped for age; he gave them all into his hand. And all the vessels of the house of God, great and small, and the treasures of the house of the Lord, and the treasures of the king, and of his princes; all these he brought to Babylon. And they burnt the house of God, and brake down the wall of Jerusalem, and burnt all the palaces thereof with fire, and destroyed all the goodly vessels thereof. And them that escaped from the sword, carried he away to Babylon; where they were servants to him and his sons, until the reign of the kingdom of Persia.

Observe—This dreadful calamity came upon them gradually. First, good king Josiah was, in judgment upon the land, slain in battle by Pharaoh-Necho, 2 Kings xxiii. 29. who put Jehoahaz that succeeded him into chains, sent him prisoner into Egypt, and put the land of Judah under a heavy

heavy tribute. 2 Kings xxiii. 33. *Jehoiakim* succeeded, a wicked prince like his predecessors. In his third year, *Nebuchadnezzar* took *Jerusalem*, and carried away part of the vessels of the house of God, and many of the people into captivity. Particularly, he gave order to *Ashpenaz* the master of his eunuchs, that he should make choice out of the children of the royal family, and of the nobility of the land, such as he found to be of the fairest countenance, and the quickest parts, to be carried to *Babylon*, and there made eunuchs in his palace, *Daniel* i. 1—4. whereby was fulfilled *Isaiah's* prediction above an hundred years before. *Isaiah* xxxix. 7. Among these youths were *Daniel*, *Hananiah*, *Misbael*, and *Azariah*. *Dan.* i. 6, 7. Moreover the king was made a tributary, and the whole land reduced into vassalage under the *Babylonians*. A severe visitation, but had not the proper effect upon *Jehoiachin*, the next king, who was as corrupt as his father. 2 Kings xxiv. 8, 9. He had been but three months on the throne; when *Nebuchadnezzar* again besieged and took *Jerusalem*, with the king and all the royal family; all the most valuable things in the temple, and in the king's treasures, with all the mighty men of valour, all the craftsmen and smiths, he took away, leaving none in the land but the poorest sort. 2 Kings xxiv. 12, 13, 14. Among the rest, *Ezekiel* (chap. i. 1, 2.) and *Mordecai* (*Esth.* ii. 5, 6.) were now carried captives. Yet still there was no amendment of the religion or morals of the nation. *Zedekiah*, the next and last king, was as bad as his predecessors. 2 Kin. xxiv. 18, 19. And in about eleven years, *Nebuchadnezzar*, after a long and close siege, took *Jerusalem*, brake down its walls, burnt the city and temple, carried away all the sacred utensils, and all the people, except a few of the very poorest to till the ground, and reduced the whole land of *Judea*, in a manner, to utter desolation for the sins thereof.

The propriety of this dispensation will appear, if we reflect,

I. That the lenity of God appeared in bringing this terrible overthrow upon them so gradually, after a succession of judgments from less to greater, for the space of twenty-two years; which should have been a warning to them, and by experience have convinced them, that the threatenings denounced by the Prophets would certainly be executed.

II. That it was a just punishment of their sins; particularly of their idolatry, whereby they forsook God, and therefore God justly forsook them, and delivered them into the hands of their enemies, as *Moses* had foretold. *Lev.* xxvi. 30—36.

III. This dreadful calamity was the most effectual means to work their reformation, which was the end proposed by the Divine Wisdom. Now, in their captive, disconsolate state, they had time, and their calamities had a natural tendency to give them a disposition, to reflect upon the long series of iniquity and perverseness which had brought them under the heaviest of God's judgments. Now their own wickedness corrected them, and their backslidings reproved them; now they must know and see, that it was an evil thing and bitter, that they had forsaken the Lord their God, and that his fear had not been in them. *Isaiah* ii. 19. In the land of their Captivity the sermons of the Prophets, declaiming with the highest authority against their profane and vicious practices, would be still sounding in their ears, and their abject, wretched condition, the consequence of

such practices, would sink them deep into their hearts, and surely give them an utter detestation of what they very well knew was the cause of all their grievous sufferings.

They had suffered themselves to be shamefully infatuated by their false prophets, who had prophesied to them in *Baal*, as the most infallible oracle. *Jer. ii. 8.* They were prophets of the deceit of their hearts, *xxiii. 26.* They had encouraged a rabble of diviners, dreamers, enchanterers, and forcerers, who had most impudently imposed upon their credulity, assuring them, in the name of the Lord too, that they should not serve the king of *Babylon*, *Jer. xxvii. 9. xxviii. 4. xxix. 8, 9*; that he should not come against them, nor against the land, *xxxvii. 19.* They belied the Lord, and said, it is not He, neither shall evil come upon us; neither shall we see sword nor famine, *Jer. v. 12.* but I will give you assured peace in this place. *xiv. 13.* Thus they caused the people to err; and their kings, princes, and priests, concurred to strengthen the delusion. *Jer. ii. 26. v. 31. xxxii. 32.* By the way, these prophets and priests were men of very wicked lives. *Zeph. iii. 4. Jer. xxiii. 11.* They committed adultery, walked in lies, strengthened the hands of evil doers, and prevented their returning from wickedness, *Jer. xxiii. 14*; they persecuted and murdered the just, in the midst of *Jerusalem*. *Lam. iv. 13.* From them profaneness went forth into all the land, *Jer. xxiii. 15.* which by their means was become full of adulterers, and mourned because of swearing, verse 10. See a more particular description of the wickedness of the land, *Ezek. xxii. 6—13.*

But now, where were all their false prophets, with all their bold pretensions, and flattering promises? The delusion is now quite at an end, and they find themselves most miserably deceived. Their eyes are opened, and they are thoroughly convinced they were a set of the vilest impostors, who had deluded them into the most wretched circumstances. The prophets were now become wind, *Jer. v. 13.* an everlasting reproach, a perpetual shame, which could not be forgotten, *xxiii. 40.* And in proportion as these deceivers were detested, the true Prophets, who would have drawn them to just regards of God and his holy law, would be esteemed and honoured.

Doubtless the lying prophets and priests had filled their heads with specious pretences for their idolatrous practices; and assured them, they were still the beloved people of God, invested in all the distinguishing privileges of his church and peculiar people, and secure under his protection; with great ostentation and confidence crying out, *The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these* [men or buildings] *Jer. vii. 4.* But now they found all their sophistry to be lying words, and could no longer take assurance from their peculiar privileges, or their magnificent temple, when their temple and city were both destroyed, and themselves cast out into an heathen land, where they were so long, and so shamefully stripped of all their peculiar honours. In short, no method could have been devised more proper to give this people a fixed detestation of idolatry, and the vile arts by which they were seduced into it. And it had this effect. They never more fell into idolatry, but retain the greatest abhorrence of it unto this day.

IV. The law of God, written by *Moses*, as the rule of their conduct in all affairs civil and religious, and the ground of their happiness, they had

so far neglected, that once it was almost unknown and lost among them. 2 Kings xxii. 8—12. This contempt of the divine law, the Prophets had frequently and strongly protested against, (*Isai. v. 24. xxx. 9. Jer. vi. 19. viii. 8. ix. 13. Hos. viii. 12. Amos ii. 4.* and in other places) and publicly declared that it would be their ruin. And in their ruined state, this must be remembered, as the primary reason of all their sufferings; and they must be thoroughly sensible, that a due regard to the law of God, was the only way to recover his favour, and their own prosperity; and accordingly must be disposed to be attentive to it. For *Ezra*, after the captivity, found so little difficulty in introducing the public reading of the law, that the people themselves called for it. *Neh. viii. 1, 2, 3, 4, 18. xiii. 1.* *Ezra* was a ready writer of the law of God, *Ezra vii. 6, 10, 11, 12*, and active in propagating the knowledge of it. Doubtless he wrote, or directed to be written, several copies of the law, to be dispersed into proper hands. And whereas before the Captivity they had no synagogues for public worship or instruction, nor any places to resort to for either, unless the temple at *Jerusalem*, or the cities of the *Levites*, or to the Prophets, when God was pleased to send them; thus ignorance grew among the people; but after the Captivity synagogues were erected among them in every city, where the law was read every sabbath, and other acts of devotion performed. This was the most effectual method of preserving the knowledge of God and his law, and a sense of their duty. This was another good effect of this dispensation, and may justly be given as one good reason of their being so strongly fixed against idolatry, ever after the *Babylonish Captivity*.

V. This dispensation was also calculated to produce good effects among the nations whither they were carried into captivity. For wherever they were dispersed in the eastern countries, they would bring with them the knowledge of the true God, now seriously impressed upon their hearts. But Divine Providence, by such signal circumstances of his interposition, as were published and known over all the vast extent of the eastern empires, raised some of the captive *Jews* to the highest posts of dignity and power in the courts of *Assyria* and *Persia*, *Dan. i. 19, 20.* Insomuch that the most haughty monarchs openly confessed the living and true God, as the only and supreme God, *Dan. ii. 47, 48, 49. iv. 34, &c.* and made decrees, that were published throughout their spacious dominions, in favour of the profession and worship of him, *Dan. iii. 29. vi. 25, &c.* And the affair of queen *Esther* and *Mordecai*, and the decree of the emperor *Abasuerus*, in favour of all the *Jews* in his empire, consisting of 127 provinces, must, not only give the *Jews* every where great distinction and honour, but also render the great God more known, and his religion more respectable; insomuch that many of the people of the land, many of the *Persians*, became *Jews*, or proselytes to the Jewish religion. *Esther viii. 11, &c.* And the great *CYRUS* was so well acquainted with the true God, that, as one of his first acts, after he was advanced to the empire of *Persia*, he made a decree for the return of the *Jews* into their own country, and for the rebuilding the temple. *Ezra i. 1—5.* From all this it is clear, that the *Jews*, notwithstanding their depravity in their own country, during the Captivity of 70 years, must have been a burning and a shining light all over the eastern countries. And thus, in this

this dispensation also, God, the Father and Governor of mankind, was working for the reformation and improvement of the world, in that which is the true excellency of their nature, and the only foundation of their happiness.

C H A P. XXXIII.

Authors within the PERIOD from the Building to the Destruction of the TEMPLE.

LITERATURE in this Period received a considerable advance; probably, by means of the schools of the Prophets.

Solomon was a great author, as he was endowed with an uncommon share of wisdom. For he spake three thousand proverbs, and his songs were a thousand and five. And he spake of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon, even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall; he spake also of beasts, and of fowl, and of creeping things, and of fishes. But of all his works only three are taken into the Sacred Canon, namely, *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes*, and his *Song*.

P R O V E R B S.

THIS Book consisteth of the most useful rules for the right direction of life in religion and morals, and is the most authentic and excellent of the kind that can be produced in antiquity. It may be divided into five parts. I. In the first part the tutor gives his pupil admonitions, directions, cautions, and excitements to the study of wisdom. *Chap.* first to the tenth. II. The second contains the Proverbs of Solomon, properly so called, delivered in distinct, independent, general sentences. *Chap.* 10th to the 22d, *ver.* 17. III. The third part begins at *chap.* xxii. 17. where the tutor again addresseth himself to his pupil, and gives him fresh admonitions to the diligent study of wisdom; which is followed by a set of instructions delivered in the imperative mood to the pupil, who is supposed all the while to be standing before him. *Chap.* xxii. 17. to *chap.* xxv. IV. The fourth part is distinguished by its being a collection of Solomon's Proverbs, selected, we may suppose, out of a much greater number, by the men of Hezekiah; perhaps, by the Prophets *Isaiah*, *Hosea*, *Micah*, who all flourished in the days of Hezekiah, and not improbably assisted him in his pious endeavours to restore true religion. 2 *Chron.* xxxi. 20, 21. This part, as the second, consists chiefly of distinct, unconnected sentences, and reacheth from *chap.* xxv. to *chap.* xxx. V. The fifth part contains a set of wise observations and instructions, which

Agur,

Agur, the son of *Jakeh*, delivered to his pupils, *Ithiel* and *Ucal*, chap. xxx. And the xxxist chapter contains the precepts which his mother, possibly a *Jewish* woman married to some neighbouring prince, delivered to *Lemuel*, her son; being passionately solicitous to guard him against vice, to establish him in the principles of justice, and to have him married to a wife of the best qualities. These two chapters are a kind of appendix to the Book of *Proverbs*. Note—It is uncertain who *Agur* and the mother of *Lemuel* were.

ECCLESIASTES.

THIS Book was written by the *Preacher*, the son of *David*, king of *Jerusalem*, chap. i. 1; that is to say, by *Solomon*, (probably in the latter part of his life) as appears from chap. i. 16. ii. 4, &c. The subject of it is, an inquiry into the chief good or happiness of man, in this world. And,

I. He confutes the false opinion of those that place happiness in human wisdom, or philosophy; in the pleasures, amusements, or splendor of life; in honour, magistracy, and dominion; in riches or wealth. This, in the six first chapters. II. He teaches, that true felicity is to be found only in a serious regard to God and religion, in the six last chapters. In both parts he intermixes several incidental reflections, which are of use to make us wise and pious. The whole is adapted to draw us from the inordinate pursuit of earthly things, and from a wrong to a lawful use of them, without any offence to God, or damage to ourselves, till we arrive at a never-dying felicity.

The SONG of SOLOMON.

THE *Song of Songs*, or the most excellent Song, was composed by *Solomon*; and is a noble *epithalamium*, or marriage song, of the pastoral kind, embellished with the most grand and beautiful images. In the letter it is allowed to be a celebration of the marriage of *Solomon* to *Pharaoh's* daughter; but the *Jewish* rabbies, and many of the Christian fathers, have understood it as a spiritual allegory, representing the love of God, or, as Christians say, of Christ, to his church; which, in other parts of Scripture, is represented as his spouse, *Psalms* xlv. 10, &c. *Hearken, O Daughter, and consider, &c.* Ver. 13. *The king's daughter is all glorious within, &c.* Which *Psalms* *David* is supposed to have made upon the same occasion, namely, at *Solomon's* marriage; wherein, as the bridegroom is justly supposed to be Christ, ver. 3—8. so his bride may well be supposed to be the church. *John* Baptist compares Christ to a bridegroom, *John* iii. 28, 29; and so doth our Lord himself, *Mat.* ix. 15. xxv. 1. and the kingdom of heaven he compares to a sumptuous marriage feast, *Mat.* xxii. 2. So also *Rev.* xix. 7. xxi. 2. the marriage of the Lamb to his bride, or wife, clothed in fine linen, (which doubtless represents the Christian church in a state of purity) is spoken of. And *St. Paul*, in strong terms, such as *Adam* used when he was married

ried to *Eve*, represents Christ as a husband to the church. *Ephes. v. 25, &c.* And so also, *2 Cor. xi. 2. I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.* And frequently in the Prophets God is set forth as the husband or bridegroom to the church. *Isai. liv. 5. lxi. 10. lxii. 4, 5. Jer. iii. 20. xxxi. 32. Hos. ii. 2, 7, 16, 19.* Hence, apostacy from God is very commonly represented as whoredom and adultery, both in the Old and New Testament.

All this is very just, and supplieth very instructive and comfortable meditation. And it is certainly the best use we can make of this elegant Song to apply it thus to spiritual purposes. But the ideas, which the Scripture gives us of God's or Christ's relation to the church, as a husband, are too general, to serve as a key to the great variety of particulars in this poem; which therefore, as it is never quoted in any other part of the Scripture, can be reduced to no certain rule of interpretation, but must be left to every person's fancy or imagination. Bp. PATRICK has done, perhaps, as much as can be done upon the spiritualizing scheme.

Within this Period were also written the Prophecies of *Joel, Amos, Hosea, Jonab, Isaiab, Micah, Nabum, Jeremiab, Habakkuk, Zephaniab, Obadiab.* These before the Captivity. During the 70 years Captivity, *Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Esther.* After the Captivity, *Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi, I. and II. Chronicles.* These complete the Canon of the Old Testament. And whereas it is of great use to the right understanding of the Prophets, to know the reigns and times in which they prophesied, and the particular occasions upon which any of them delivered their prophecies, I shall now attempt to digest and range them in chronological order, as follows.

C H A P. XXXIV.

PROPHETS before the CAPTIVITY.

ABOUT twenty-six years after the death of *Elisba*, the Prophet, (*2 Kings xiii. 20.*) *Jonab the son of Amittai, the Prophet, which was of Gath-heper*, was sent by God with a message of encouragement and success to *Jeroboam II.* king of *Israel.* *2 Kings xiv. 25.* This might happen when *Jonab* was about 28 years of age.

JOEL i. ii. iii.

JOEL at *Jerusalem* (*Joel ii. 1, 15, 17.*) might prophesy before *Amos* at *Samaria*, *Amos i. 1. iv. 1.* For *Amos*, chap. iv. 7, 9. may refer to the devastation

devastation by *palmer-worms*, &c. and drought, which *Joel* predicted, chap. i. 6, 7, 19, 20. However, as the sense of this prophecy, in no part, that I know of, depends upon the time when it was delivered, there can be no harm in supposing that *Joel* prophesied about this time.

AMOS i.—ix.

SOME time after *Joel*, *Amos* might begin to prophesy in the kingdom of *Israel*. Certainly he did prophesy in those days of *Uzziah* or *Azariah* king of *Judah*, and of *Jeroboam II.* king of *Israel*, in which they were cotemporaries, chap. i. 1. How long he continued, is not intimated. He had no regular education in the schools of the Prophets, (which supposeth that other Prophets had) but was originally a herdsman, and a gatherer of *sycamore fruit*, or wild figs, chap. vii. 14. He had an express commission from God to prophesy unto his people *Israel*, ver. 15. This book may consist of several distinct discourses; but, as they are without date, we cannot assign the particular times when they were delivered.

HOSEA i. ii. iii.

HOSEA is justly supposed to be cotemporary with *Amos*. He prophesied against the ten tribes, or the kingdom of *Israel*, beginning in the reign of *Jeroboam II.* and prophesying in the reigns of *Uzziah*, *Jotham*, *Ahaz*, and *Hezekiah*, kings of *Judah*. He predicted the Captivity of the ten tribes; and as that Captivity happened in the sixth year of *Hezekiah*, probably he lived to see it accomplished by *Shalmaneser* king of *Assyria*; which was done about 64 years after the commencement of his prophetic office.

This Prophet is commanded to take unto him a wife of whoredoms, and children of whoredoms, chap. i. 2. This might all be transacted in a vision, in the council of God. See the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh chapters of *Ezekiel*. Or it might be a parable, to be spoken as such to the children of *Israel*. See *Ezek.* xxiv. 3, &c. Here that is ordered to be done as a fact, which was only to be spoken as a parable. But if the Prophet did really marry a lewd woman, who had children, not by him, but by some other man, this was no sin in him, who did it by Divine Command, in order to explain to the *Israelites* their wickedness, and the punishment of it. The adulterous wife represented the *Israelites*, who by their idolatries had gone a whoring from God, their own Husband. The children which this woman bare, are the ruinous effects of the idolatry of the children of *Israel*. The first bastard was called *Jezreel*; and denoted the vengeance which God would take upon the house of *Jehu*, for the blood which he shed in *Jezreel*, chap. i. 4. The second was called *Lo-ruhamah*, ver. 6. to denote that God would no longer spare the house of *Israel*, but take them quite away out of their land. The name of the third was *Lo-ammi*, ver. 9. which signified that the relation between God and the *Israelites* was dissolved.

HOSEA iv.

THE *interregnum* in *Israel*, preceding the reign of *Zechariah*, was doubtless a time of very great disorder and violence, and of much bloody strife for the crown. Probably, *Zechariah* gained it by cutting off competitors. *Shallum* slew him, *Menahem* slew *Shallum*, and all within the space of seven months. To this sad state of things *Hosea* may well be supposed to refer, *chap.* iv. 2. *By swearing and lying, and killing and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth [reacheth unto] blood.* Here, therefore, we may place the fourth chapter of *Hosea*.

JONAH i, ii, iii, iv.

JONAH, I suppose, about the second year of *Menahem*, king of *Israel*, and about the 70th year of his age, was sent to cry against *Nineveh*, about 700 miles from *Gath-heper*, then a great, wealthy, populous and haughty city, the chief seat of the *Assyrian* empire, and the mistress of the world; which had long been remarkable for luxury and jollity to a proverb, *ἡ πόλις Νινεὺς εὐφρανέουσα*, better than merry *Nineveh*. By *Zephaniah* it is called, *the rejoicing, or joyous, city*, *chap.* ii. 15. To be sent with a message of divine wrath to such a place as this, could not but seem a frightful and dangerous errand to *Jonah*. He saw how much the *Israelites*, God's own people, hated and persecuted the Prophets, who reproved and threatened them. What then could he expect from that great and wicked city, *Nineveh*, the head-quarters of pride and sin? Further, he knew the Prophets very much hazarded their reputation in the world, when employed in denouncing judgments; because God, being gracious, was slow in executing them. On this account, the Prophets at *Bethel* and *Jerusalem* were vilely abused and decried by insolent and rude infidels, who durst even profess to *desire*, or long for, *the day of the Lord*, (*Amos* v. 18.) in a confident persuasion that it would never come; and dared to challenge God to hasten his work. *Isai.* v. 19. See also *Jer.* xvii. 15. *Ezekiel* xii. 22. And if this should be *Jonah's* case at *Nineveh*, what could he expect but to be torn in pieces for an impostor? How must he, and the religion he professed, be exposed to public contempt and scorn! This was what he particularly dreaded, *chap.* iv. 2. He was therefore resolved to flee from the presence of [from before] *Jehovah*; that is, I suppose, to run away from the Council of God in the land of *Israel*, to some remote country beyond sea*, where, he thought, it was never held. But he was stopped by a miracle, and at length obliged to deliver the doleful message, *Yet forty days and impenitent Nineveh shall be overthrown.* Convinced of his miraculous mission, § the king proclaimed a fast,

* Note—*Tarsish* may signify any remote country beyond sea, as the *Indes* now with us. See Root 1827. in the Eng. Heb. Concordance.

§ *Luke* xi. 30.

fast, and enjoined all the usual forms of repentance; *And God repented of the evil which he had said he would do unto them.*

It is very probable, that the idolatrous priests, and the astrologers, soothsayers, and magicians, who must be numerous at *Nineveh*, as well as at *Babylon*, (*Isai.* xlvii. 13. *Dan.* ii. 2.) would zealously endeavour to divert the king, when the first fright was over, from attending to a message from *Jehovah*, as soon as ever they possibly could, before the forty days were expired. They would naturally represent *Jonah* to the king and all the people, as an impostor; and bear them in hand that the prediction was false, and would not be fulfilled. This must give the Prophet, who was zealous for the glory of the God of *Israel*, very great uneasiness; insomuch that he wished for death, *chap.* iv. 2, 3; as *Elijah*, in a case somewhat similar, had done before him, *1 Kings* xix. 4.

The question of *Jehovah*, *Jon.* iv. 4. which we render, *Dost thou well to be angry?* should have been rendered, *Art thou very much grieved?* And so *ver.* 9. See *Heb. Eng. Concordance.* R. 748, 637.

Pul, the king of *Assyria*, who came against the land of *Israel* in the reign of *Menahem*, *2 Kings* xv. 19. is supposed by Archbishop *USHER* to be the king of *Nineveh*, to whom *Jonah* was sent. As it appears from the history, that *Pul* had no design to make conquest of the land of *Israel*, I can assign no reason why he should reach his arm over the kingdom of *Syria*, which lay to the extent of about three hundred miles, between his dominions, and the land of *Canaan*, to strike at *Israel*, but that he did it in revenge for the supposed insult which *Jonah* had offered to him and his people.

ISAIAH vi. ii. iii. iv. v.

ISAIAH, the brightest luminary of the *Jewish* church, justly called the evangelical Prophet, he speaks so much and so clearly of *Christ*, began to prophesy in the year king *Uzziah* died, *chap.* vi. 1. and prophesied in *Judah* in the successive reigns of *Jotham*, *Abaz*, and *Hezekiah*. He was certainly alive and prophesied when *Merodachbaladan* sent his embassy to *Hezekiah*, who had been sick, in the 14th year of *Hezekiah*, and before *Christ* 714. Thus we certainly know that he prophesied 46 years. There is an ancient and probable tradition among the *Jews*, that he suffered martyrdom under *Manasseh*, in the first year of his reign, before *Christ* 698, by being cruelly sawn asunder; to which the Apostle, *Heb.* xi. 37. is generally thought to have respect. And then he must have continued 61 years. See *PIERCE* upon *Heb.* xi. 37.

The first chapter, by reason of the grand exordium, might be judged proper to stand at the front of the book; but it gives such an account of the distressed, desolate condition of the land of *Judah*, as agrees much better with the wicked and afflicted reign of the apostate *Abaz*, than with the flourishing circumstances of the country in the reigns of *Uzziah*, and of his son and successor *Jotham*, who were both, in the main, good princes. Compare *Isai.* i. 7, 8, 9. with *2 Chron.* xxvi. 1—16. and the whole 27th chapter. But the second, third, fourth, and fifth chapters of this prophecy, do describe, and exactly correspond to, a state

of national wealth and prosperity, which are usually attended with pride, arrogance, and luxury. See *chap. ii. 6—18. iii. 16—25. v. 8, 11, 12.*

Therefore, I take this to be the order of those chapters. In the sixth chapter, and in the year before Christ 759, the Prophet, in the council of God, received his commission; and soon after delivered the contents of the second, third, fourth, and fifth chapters. And these chapters contain all that remains of his prophecies in the reigns of *Uzziah* and *Jotham*, for about the space of 16 years, till the first year of king *Abaz*.

M I C A H i, ii.

THESE two chapters were delivered before the destruction of *Samaria*, which is here predicted, *chap. i. 6.* in the reign of *Jotham*, *chap. i. 1.* and therefore may be rightly placed about this time.

I S A I A H vii.

IN the first year of *Abaz* king of *Judah*, *Rezin* king of *Syria*, and *Pekah* king of *Israel*, formed a design of dethroning *Abaz*, and of extirpating the family of *David*, by setting up the son of *Tabeal*, some potent, factious *Jew*, to be king of *Judah*; and therefore, having no design upon the nation, but only upon the royal family, marched directly to *Jerusalem*, and laid close siege to it. But as it was the will of God, not to extirpate the family of *David*, but only to punish wicked *Abaz*, he sent *Isaiah* to encourage him to make a vigorous defence, and to assure him they should not prevail against him, and that the house of *David* should subsist till the *Messiah* was born. Then was the prophecy delivered to *Abaz* contained in the seventh chapter of *Isaiah* *.

I S A I A H viii, ix, x. to the fifth Verse.

AHAZ, a wicked idolator, paid little regard to what *Isaiah* had spoken to him in the name of the Lord. Therefore God ordered *Isaiah* to take a large

* ISAI. vii. 8. *Within 65 years Ephraim shall be broken, that it be not a people.* This was predicted in the first year of *Abaz*. *Abaz* reigned 16 years; and in the sixth year of his successor, *Hezekiah*, *Sabalmaneser* took *Samaria*, and carried away *Israel* [*Ephraim*] unto *Affyria*. This makes but 16 and 5, or 21 years. How then shall we make out 65 years? This has very much puzzled the critics. But observe, probably *Israel*, or *Ephraim*, was carried into captivity by the *Affyrians* three times. I. By *Tiglath-Pileser*, 1 *Chron. v. 26. 2 Kings xv. 29.* II. By his son *Sabalmaneser*, 2 *Kings xvii. 6. xviii. 10, 11.* Thus *Ephraim* was no more a kingdom. III. Probably by *Esarbadon*, who finally carried away all the remains of the people; which is implied in his bringing new inhabitants from *Babylon*, *Cuthab*, &c. 2 *Kings xvii. 24. Ezra iv. 2.* Thus *Ephraim* was no more a people. This happened in the 22d year of *Manasseh*, 65 years from the first of *Abaz*. See Dr. PRIDEAUX'S *Con. qd an.* 677.

a large roll of parchment, and therein, with the *pen of a man*, i. e. in the common and most legible way of writing, to put down and publish, what God should further discover about the present deliverance and future calamities of *Judah*. The roll was to be a comment upon the name of a son which was then born to the Prophet, and by Divine Protection was called *Maher-she-lal-basch-baz*, i. e. *make speed to the spoil, and hasten to the prey*; denoting the speedy destruction of the two confederate kings of *Samaria* and *Damascus*. This roll, I suppose, takes in the eighth and ninth chapters of *Isaiab*, and the five first verses of the 10th chapter.

I S A I A H xvii.

THIS chapter relates to the same subject, the destruction of *Israel* and *Damascus*; and therefore, I judge, it was delivered in the same year, after the roll was finished. For in about two years after, *Tiglath-pileser*, king of *Assyria*, took *Damascus*, and carried the people therein captive to *Kir*. 2 Kings xvi. 9.

I S A I A H i.

PEKAH and *Rezin* failing in their attempt upon *Jerusalem*, (2 Kings xvi. 5. *Isai*. vii. 1.) the next year, 741, they returned with forces better appointed, and councils better concerted; and dividing themselves into three armies, one under *Pekah*, another under *Rezin*, and a third under *Zichri*, a mighty man of *Ephraim*, they fell upon the country in three different parts, making every where terrible havock and slaughter, and carrying away a prodigious number of captives. See 2 Chron. xxviii. 5-9. And no sooner was the land freed from those enemies, but it was invaded by the *Edomites*, on the south, and the *Philistines*, on the west, who treated it with the same cruelty, slaying, plundering, and carrying away captives. 1 Chron. xxviii. 17, 18, 19. Thus was *Judah* grievously distressed all over the country, and brought exceeding low, which lately had been high in wealth and power, because they and their king had forsaken the Lord their God. And upon this occasion, most probably, *Isaiab* delivered the prophetic sermon contained in the first chapter, as it is very suitable to the state of the nation at that time.

I S A I A H xxviii.

THIS chapter, relating to the destruction of *Ephraim*, or the ten tribes, without any mention of *Syria* or *Damascus*, lieth between the destruction of *Damascus*, 740, and the captivity of the ten tribes, 721.

H O S E A v. vi.

AHAZ, greatly distressed by *Pekah*, *Rezin*, &c. called in *Tiglath-pileser*, king of *Assyria*, to his help, 2 Kings xvi. 7. 2 Chron. xxviii. 16.

And *Menahem*, king of *Israel*, about 30 years before that, had hired *Pul*, king of *Affyria*, to confirm the kingdom in his hand, 2 Kings xv. 19. though they reaped no benefit from them. These are the only times in which the kings of *Judah* and *Israel* applied to the *Affyrian* for assistance. And whereas *Hosea*, chap. v. 13. mentions both those applications, the fifth and sixth chapters must be taken in after *Abaz* had applied to *Tiglatb-pileser*.

ISAIAH xiv. 28, &c.

THE *Philistines* triumphed over *Israel* all the days of *Abaz*. But in the year *Abaz* died, *Isaiah* delivered the burden, or message, relating to them, chap. xiv. 28, &c. which was fulfilled by *Hezekiah*, son and successor to *Abaz*. 2 Kings xviii. 8.

ISAIAH xv. xvi.

THE *Moabites* had not used the *Israelites* well, who fled for shelter from the ravages of *Pekah* and *Rezin*. With this inhumanity they are ironically upbraided, *Isai*. xvi. 3. 4. But now they are told, the oppressor and spoiler were ceased, and the throne of *Hezekiah* should be established in mercy, and he should sit upon it in truth, &c. Therefore, this prophecy against *Moab* must have been delivered about the beginning (perhaps in the second year) of *Hezekiah*'s reign. And Dr. PRIDEAUX supposeth it was accomplished by *Shalmaneser*, three or four years after, when, as he thinks, *Shalmaneser*, previously to the siege of *Samaria*, subdued the *Moabites*, to prevent any incursions, or attacks, from that quarter.

HOSEA vii—xiv.

THE prophecies in these chapters were delivered (1.) after *Ephraim*, or the king of *Israel*, had called to *Egypt* for succour, chap. vii. 11. xii. 1. as *Menahem* had done before to *Affyria*. 2 Kings xv. 19. But the only time they applied to *Egypt* was, when king *Hoshea*, revolting from *Shalmaneser*, sent messengers to So king of *Egypt*. 2 Kings xvii. 4. Which occasioned *Shalmaneser*'s besieging of *Samaria*, and carrying the ten tribes into captivity. And therefore these chapters might be delivered about three years before that event. (2.) These prophecies were delivered after the first year of *Shalman*, or *Shalmaneser*, who, according to Dr. PRIDEAUX, began to reign in the year before Christ 728, or 729. For the Prophet *Hosea* refers to the destruction of *Beth-arbel* by *Shalman*, chap. x. 14. And they were delivered before the taking of *Samaria*, which was in the 8th year of *Shalmaneser*, before Christ 721. For the Prophet evidently, in those chapters, supposeth, that *Ephraim*, or the ten tribes, were not yet carried into captivity. Therefore, they were delivered after the destruction of *Beth-arbel*, and before the captivity of the ten tribes, about the time above noted.

MICAH iii, iv, v, vi, vii.

THE last verse of the third chapter of *Micah* was uttered in the time of *Hezekiah*, Jer. xxvi. 18; and here may both that chapter, and all that follow it, be placed, as prophesied in some time of *Hezekiah's* first 13 years, before *Sennacherib* besieged *Jerusalem*. For the Prophet seems to speak of that siege and *Sennacherib's* blasphemy, chap. v. 1, 5. He speaketh glorious things of *Christ* and his kingdom, and nameth the very town where he should be born, chap. v. 2. In chapter iv. 1, 2, 3, he useth the very words of *Isaiah*, chap. ii. 2, 3, 4, to express the conflux to the kingdom of *Christ*, his power in it, and the peace which, at length, it should give to the world.

NAHUM i, ii, iii.

AFTER *Shalmaneser*, king of *Nineveh*, had taken *Samaria*, and carried the ten tribes captive, *Nahum* might predict the ruin of *Nineveh*, then the capital of the *Assyrian* empire.

ISAIAH xxiii.

SHALMANESER, having taken *Samaria*, turned his arms against the city of *Tyre*, which held out against him five years, and then was delivered from the siege by the death of *Shalmaneser*. By this success they were too much elated, and growing very insolent, this occasioned the prophecy against them in this chapter; which foretels the miserable overthrow of *Tyre*, which was effected by *Nebuchadnezzar*, king of *Babylon*. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. An.* 715, 720.

ISAIAH xxiv, xxv, xxvi, xxvii.

THESE chapters may refer to the final desolation of *Judea* and *Jerusalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*; but I can discover no marks of the time when they were delivered. However, with the threatenings he mixes many gracious promises and comforts. See Dr. LIGHTFOOT.

ISAIAH xxxviii, xxxix.

In this year king *Hezekiah* fell sick, and the other affairs happened, which are recorded in this chapter: for 15 years are added to *Hezekiah's* life, chap. xxxviii. 5. and as he reigned in all 29 years, this must have been the 14th year of his reign. And that it happened when the intentions of *Sennacherib*, king of *Assyria*, to attack *Jerusalem* were known, appears from *Isaiah* xxxviii. 6.

ISAIAH xxix, xxx, xxxi, xxxii, xxxiii, xxxiv, xxxv.

HEZEKIAH, having refused to pay the annual tribute to the king of *Assyria*, towards the end of the 14th year, *Sennacherib* coming upon him with a numerous army, he made all manner of preparation for a vigorous defence. *2 Kings* xviii. 13. *2 Chron.* xxxii. *Isai.* xxxvi. Particularly, he entered into an alliance with the king of *Egypt* and *Ethiopia*. *2 Kings* xviii. 21. *Isai.* xxxvi. 6. This was a measure displeasing to God, and therefore is protested against by his Prophet *Isaiab* in the xxxth and xxxist chapters. And at the same time all the other chapters, from the xxixth to the xxxvith chapter, especially those that have immediate reference to this invasion, might have been dictated to the Prophet by the spirit of God.

ISAIAH xxii. Verse 1 to 15.

As in this paragraph are manifest allusions to *Sennacherib*'s invasion and *Hezekiah*'s preparations for the defence of *Jerusalem*, (compare verse 9, 10, 11. *2 Chron.* xxxii. 5, 30.) this prophetic admonition to the people, who depended too much upon these preparations, probably was delivered about this time. See *LOWTH*'s Comment. on the place.

ISAIAH xxi.

THE inhabitants of *Kedar* were the descendants of *Ishmael*, *Gen.* xxi. 13, and were one species of *Arabians* dwelling in *Arabia Petraea*. These were to be ruined within a year after this prophecy was given out. Most probably they were overthrown either by *Sennacherib*, as he went into, or returned out of *Egypt*; or by *Tirhakah* king of *Ethiopia*, as he advanced out of *Egypt* against *Sennacherib*. *2 Kings* xix. 9. And therefore, this prophecy may be placed at this time, or within a year or two of it.

ISAIAH xx.

HEZEKIAH, having treated with *Sennacherib*, and agreed to pay him a sum of money, *2 Kings* xviii. 14, 15, 16, *Sennacherib* turned his arms against *Egypt*; which he greatly distressed for three years together, *Isai.* xx. 3, 4. But first he sent *Tartan*, one of his generals, before him, to take *Ashdod*, the key to *Egypt*. At this time the prophecy against *Egypt* in the xxth chapter of *Isaiab*, was delivered. Note—*Sennacherib* is, in ver. 1, called *Sargon*. Ver. 5. They, the Jews, shall be afraid and ashamed of *Ethiopia* their expectation, and of *Egypt* their glory.

I S A I A H xviii, xix.

THESE two chapters are also levelled against *Egypt* and *Ethiopia*, upon which the *Jews* relied too much; and therefore might be delivered about the same time.

I S A I A H x. ver. 5, &c. xi, xii, xiii, xiv. to ver. 28.

It appears from chap. x. 8—12, which is a *profopopæia*, or supposed speech of the king of *Assyria*, that this chapter was delivered after the taking of *Samaria* by *Salmaneser*, 721; and some time before *Sennacherib* besieged *Jerusalem*, 710, who was the only king of *Assyria* that besieged *Jerusalem* after the taking of *Samaria*. And the speech in this place bearing a near affinity to that of *Sennacherib*, 2 Kings xix. 10—14. *Isaiah* xxxvii. 10—14, it is probable that this, and the other chapters, to the 28th verse of the xivth chapter, were delivered about the time *Sennacherib* besieged *Jerusalem*. Note—In chapter x. 11. *Shall I not, as I have done unto Samaria, &c.* *Sennacherib* speaks as king of *Assyria*, and so takes in what his father *Shalmaneser* had done, as if done by himself.

I S A I A H xxxvi, xxxvii.

SENNACHERIB returning out of *Egypt*, where he had been 3 years, notwithstanding the agreement of peace which he made with *Hezekiah*, marched his army again into *Judea*, laid siege to *Lachish*, and from thence sent three of his generals with a proud and blasphemous message to *Jerusalem*, 2 Kings xviii. 17, 18. 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 9, &c. This event, with the circumstances which attended and followed it, are recorded in the xxxvith and xxxviith chapters of *Isaiah*.

NOTE—Before *Sennacherib* laid siege to *Jerusalem*, *Tirhakah*, king of *Ethiopia*, advanced against him out of *Egypt*, 2 Kings xix. 9; but, as the Prophet *Isaiah* had predicted, did the *Jews* no service; for he was overthrown by *Sennacherib*, who after that returned to *Jerusalem*, where his army, being 185,000 men, were all miraculously destroyed in one night. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con.* at the year 710.

I S A I A H xl, xli, xlii, xliii, &c. to the end of the Book.

As there is no direction to lay these chapters, or any of them, in any particular time, they may all be allotted to the eleven last years of *Hezekiah*'s prolonged life,

I S A I A H xxii. Ver. 15, to the end.

SHEBNA had been secretary to king *Hezekiah*, and the good and pious *Eliakim*, the master of his household, *Isai*. xxxvi. 3. 22. *Shebna*, by the questions, chap. xxii. 16, seems to have been a foreigner, and not well affected to the Jewish religion. *What hast thou to do here? and whom, what relations, hast thou here?* It is possible this *Shebna*, a man of great abilities, might have got the young king *Manasseh*, but 12 years old, and the whole management of affairs, into his own hands; having routed *Eliakim* by such arts as courtiers are wont to practise. For he was now both treasurer, and master of the household. To this, perhaps, the wicked conduct of *Manasseh* may be assigned. *Shebna*, secure of the stability and continuance of his power and grandeur, was hewing out a magnificent sepulchre for himself and heirs, to perpetuate his memory to all succeeding times. On this occasion, *Isaiab* might publish this prophecy, predicting *Shebna's* captivity and death, in a remote foreign country, and the future exaltation of good *Eliakim*. This, which would greatly exasperate *Shebna*, and might occasion *Isaiab's* being put to a cruel death, [sawn asunder, *Heb.* xi. 37.] was fulfilled about twenty-two years after, when *Shebna* was taken captive with *Manasseh* by *Esrabaddon*, and carried to *Babylon*, where *Shebna* continued all his life. But *Manasseh*, upon his repentance, was restored to the throne of *Judah*. And then, probably, good *Eliakim* was restored and intrusted with the management of all his affairs, and assisted him in the great reformation he made in religion. 2 *Chron.* xxxiii. 11—17. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con.* Anno 677. *Manasseh* 22.

J E R E M I A H i, ii.

IN this year *Jeremiah*, in the council of God, received his prophetic commission, as in the first chapter. See also chap. xxv. 3. And in this year probably he published the admonitions, warnings, and threatenings, in the second chapter.

J E R E M I A H xi. Verse 1—18.

THE Prophet, ver. 2—9, most probably refers to the covenant which *Jeshiah* publicly made to keep God's commandments, upon finding the book of the law. 2 *Kings* xxii. 11. xxiii. 3. This was in the 18th year of king *Jeshiah*. 2 *Kings* xxii. 3.

J E R E M I A H iii, iv, v, vi, vii, viii, ix, x, xii, &c. to the xxi.

THESE chapters, for any thing that appears to the contrary, do lie in regular order; nor have we any ground or intimation for transposing any

of them. There is a date, chap. iii. 6. *In the days of Josiah*, without mentioning the year of his reign; which, however, shews, that that chapter was delivered in some part of his reign. And whereas a severe drought is frequently mentioned in several of these chapters, (*viz.* chap. iii. 3. v. 24, 25. viii. 13, 20. ix. 10, 12. xii. 4. xiv. 1, 2, 3, 4.) this shews, that they are to be laid together in the same year, or years, in which the drought continued; and all the rest, to the xxist, may follow in order of time; and all might be delivered in the last years of king *Josiah*. Dr. LIGHTFOOT.

J E R E M I A H xi. Ver. 18, to the end.

IN some part of the same years the men of *Anathoth* might conspire against *Jeremiah*.

HABAKKUK i, ii, iii. ZEPHANIAH i, ii, iii.

As these two Prophets prophesied the same things that *Jeremiah* did, and upon the same occasion, that is, destruction and desolation upon *Judah* and *Jerusalem*, because of the many heinous sins they were guilty of, they might prophesy about this time.

J E R E M I A H xxii. Ver. 1—24.

JEREMIAH being sent of God to the king's house, there proclaimed God's judgments against him and his family, contained in these verses of this chapter. This was soon after *Jehoahaz*, or *Shallum*, was carried captive into *Egypt*, by *Pharaoh-necho*, king of *Egypt*, who slew *Josiah*, ver. 10, 11. *Weep not for the dead, Josiah, but weep sore for him that goeth away, Jehoahaz; for he shall return no more.* Note—*Jehoahaz* reigned but three months.

J E R E M I A H xxvi.

AFTER that, the Prophet was ordered to go to the temple, and to denounce to all the people the judgments of God, if they did not repent. By this he was brought in danger of his life, through the resentment of the Priests and Prophets, ver. 7, 8; but was preserved by the princes, ver. 16.

J E R E M I A H xxv.

IN this chapter, and in the beginning of this year, *Jeremiah* prophesied of the coming of *Nebuchadnezzar* against *Judah* and *Jerusalem*.

J E R E M I A H xxxv.

THE *Rechabites*, upon *Nebuchadnezzar's* beginning to invade the land of *Judea*, retired out of the country to *Jerusalem*, where *Jeremiah* found them, in this chapter.

J E R E M I A H xlv.

IN the same year, after *Nebuchadnezzar* had defeated the army of *Pharaoh-necho*, this prophecy relating to the Gentiles was delivered.

J E R E M I A H xxxvi. Ver. 1—9.

IN the same year God commanded *Jeremiah* to collect, and write in a roll, all the words of prophecy which had been spoken by him against *Israel* and *Judah*, and against the nations. Which he executed by the assistance of *Baruch*, his amanuensis; who, as *Jeremiah* was then under confinement, ver. 5. read the roll in the temple upon the fasting-day, i. e. the great day of atonement, being the 10th of the seventh month.

J E R E M I A H xlv.

BARUCH being very much affrighted at the threats contained in the roll, and probably uneasy under apprehensions of the danger he might incur by reading it publicly, *Jeremiah*, by the command of God, delivered to him the message of encouragement and comfort contained in this chapter.

D A N I E L i.

IMMEDIATELY after this, *Nebuchadnezzar*, who set out upon his expedition the year before, laid siege to *Jerusalem*, and took it; and bound *Jehoiakim* in fetters, with a design to carry him to *Babylon*. 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6. But upon *Jehoiakim's* submission, 2 Kings xxiv. 1, he did not carry him to *Babylon*, but restored him to the kingdom. Nevertheless, he carried great numbers of the people, and sons of the royal family, and of the nobility, captives, among the rest *Daniel*.

J E R E M I A H xxxvi. Verse 9, to the end of the Chapter.

THIS year, after the *Chaldeans* were gone from *Jerusalem*, *Jehoiakim* and his people growing worse and worse, in the ninth month, at the fast, which was then proclaimed, on account of *Nebuchadnezzar's* having taken

taken the city the year before, *Baruch* again read the roll in the house of the Lord, *ver.* 9, 80. Which coming to the king's ear, and part of the roll being read to him, he, thinking perhaps that *Nebuchadnezzar* had already executed the Divine threatenings, and nothing more was now to be feared, and that the Prophet was a malicious, troublesome fellow, burnt the roll, and commanded *Jeremiah* and *Baruch* to be apprehended. But they could not be found, for the Lord hid them. Note—*Jeremiah* was now at liberty.

DANIEL ii.

IN this year, which was the second of *Nebuchadnezzar*, according to the *Babylonish* account, the 4th according to the *Jewish*, *Daniel* revealed to *Nebuchadnezzar* his dream.

JEREMIAH xxii. Ver. 24, to the end.

IN this year this prophecy was declared against *Jehoiachin*, or *Coniah*, who reigned but 3 months, and then, with many others, was carried into captivity. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 11, &c. His uncle *Zedekiah* succeeded him, 2 *Kings* xxiv. 17.

JEREMIAH xxiii.

THIS chapter might be delivered at the same time with the foregoing prophecy.

JEREMIAH xiii. Ver. 15, to the end.

By the king and queen mentioned *ver.* 18, are probably meant *Jehoiachin* and his mother. See chap. xxii. 26. 2 *Kings* xxiv. 12. Thus, this prophecy must have been delivered about the same time with the foregoing.

JEREMIAH xxiv.

AFTER *Jehoiachin* or *Jeconiah* was carried into captivity by *Nebuchadnezzar*, this prophecy was delivered.

JEREMIAH xlix. Verse 34, to the end.

IN this year also is to be placed the prophecy against *Elam*, a kingdom upon the river *Ulai*, eastward beyond the *Tigris*, in which stood *Sbusan*, afterward the metropolis of the kingdom of *Persia*.

JEREMIAH xxix.

ABOUT the second year of Zedekiah's reign, Jeremiah's letter, contained in this chapter, was sent to the captive Jews at *Babylon*; and an impious answer returned by *Shemaiah*.

JEREMIAH xxx, xxxi.

THESE two chapters, which assure the captive Jews that they should not only return again to *Judea*, but also be the particular care of the Divine Providence to the end of the world, to shew the certainty of the encouraging contents, are ordered to be written in a book, chap. xxx. 2, about the same time with the foregoing letter, and probably were sent to the captive Jews in *Babylon*, whom they principally respected.

JEREMIAH xxvii.

THIS chapter is to be placed in this year, (see chap. xxviii. 1.) namely, after the departure of *Nebuchadnezzar* out of *Judea* and *Syria*, when the kings of the *Ammonites*, *Moabites*, *Edomites*, *Zidonians*, *Tyrrians*, &c. sent an embassy to *Zedekiah*, proposing to him a league against the king of *Babylon*. Note—In the first verse, *Jehoiakim* is put for *Zedekiah*, [see ver. 3.] probably by a mistake of the transcriber, who might then have his eye upon the first verse of the foregoing chapter.

JEREMIAH xxviii.

IN this year the affair concerning *Hananiah* the false Prophet, related in this chapter, was transacted. Note—The first verse, according to the best commentators, should be read thus, *When it had been so*, [i. e. when I had continued prophesying with a yoke upon my shoulders from that year, which was] *in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, until the fourth year, &c.* See *Glasf. Phil. sacra Lib. IV. Tract. I. Observ. V. Pag. 860. Nold. Concord. Nota 677*, and *LOWTH* upon the place.

JEREMIAH i, li.

THESE two chapters contain a book of prophecies which *Jeremiah* wrote, and sent to *Babylon*, by *Seraiah*, who was sent thither by *Zedekiah*, in the 4th year of his reign, chap. li. 59, &c. [*when he went with, rather, from Zedekiah &c.*] See *Nold. Concord.* under *אֶת* or *אֶת* No. 1.

E Z E K I E L i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii.

IN the 5th year of *Jehoiachin's* captivity, which was also the 5th of *Zedekiah's* reign, *Ezekiel*, a captive priest in *Chaldea*, received his prophetic commission in the council of God, and had the revelations and prophecies contained in the seven first chapters of his book. Note—*Ezekiel* dates his prophecies from the year in which himself and king *Jehoiachin* were carried into captivity.

E Z E K I E L viii, ix, x, xi.

THIS year *Ezekiel* in a vision was carried to *Jerusalem*, shewn the several sorts of idolatry practised there by the *Jews* in the very temple; and had revealed unto him the punishments which God would inflict upon them for those abominations, and the divine protection of those in captivity, who continued steady and faithful to his service.

E Z E K I E L xii, xiii, xiv, xv, xvi, xvii, xviii, xix.

ABOUT this time, *Zedekiah* having entered into a confederacy with the king of *Egypt*, and broken the solemn oath of fidelity which he had sworn to king *Nebuchadnezzar*, God, both by types and words of revelation, foreshewed to *Ezekiel* the taking of *Jerusalem* by the *Chaldeans*, *Zedekiah's* flight by night, the putting out of his eyes, his imprisonment and death at *Babylon*, the carrying away of the *Jews*, and the remains of the *Israelites*, contained in the above-mentioned chapters. Note—*Daniel*, though then but a young man, was grown to such a pitch of piety and holiness, as to be matched, by God himself, with *Noah* and *Joh. Ezek. xiv. 14, 20.*

E Z E K I E L xx, xxi, xxii, xxiii.

The elders of *Israel* came to *Ezekiel* to enquire of the Lord; but God refuseth to be enquired of by such wicked hypocrites; and in these four chapters denounces the judgments their abominable impieties deserved,

J E R E M I A H xxi, xxxiv. Ver. 1—8.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR having advanced a great army against *Judea*, 2 *Kim. xxv. 1.* to punish *Zedekiah* for his perjury and rebellion, *Zedekiah* first sent *Pashur* and *Zephaniah* to *Jeremiah*, to desire him to enquire of the Lord; by whom *Jeremiah* returned the answer related in the 21st chapter.

chapter. Afterward, *Jeremiah* was ordered in person to deliver to *Zedekiah* the prediction contained in chap. xxiv. 1—8.

J E R E M I A H xlvii.

PHARAOH HOPHRA marching out of *Egypt* to the relief of his ally *Zedekiah* against *Nebuchadnezzar*, who was advancing to besiege *Jerusalem*, in his way took *Gaza*, a town of the *Philistines*. A little before this event, *Jeremiah* uttered this prophecy against the *Philistines*.

J E R E M I A H xlviii, xlix. Ver. 1—34.

THESE prophecies, relating to the *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, *Edomites*, &c. who would be obnoxious to the ravages of the *Affyrian* armies, might be delivered at the same time with the former.

E Z E K I E L xxiv, xxv.

On the tenth day of the tenth month in the same year, when *Nebuchadnezzar's* army had laid siege to *Jerusalem*, the same was revealed, on the very same day, to *Ezekiel* in *Chaldea*; and the destruction of the city was typified by a boiling caldron; the same day also his wife died, as recorded in chap. xxiv. But vengeance is denounced against the neighbouring countries, that rejoiced in the preceding calamities, or should rejoice in those that were to come upon *Judea*. Chap. xxv.

J E R E M I A H xxxvii. Ver. 1—11.

NOT long after *Nebuchadnezzar's* army had laid siege to *Jerusalem*, *Pharaoh-Hophra* came with a great force to the relief of *Zedekiah*. Upon which *Nebuchadnezzar* raised the siege of *Jerusalem*; in order to march against him. Upon which *Zedekiah* sent a message to *Jeremiah*, before he was put into prison, chap. xxxvii. 4, the answer to which is contained in chap. xxxvii. 1—11.

J E R E M I A H xxxiv. Ver. 8. to the end.

UPON the approach of *Nebuchadnezzar's* army, the terrified Jews entered into a solemn covenant, to observe God's law, and to release the Hebrew servants, which they kept in bondage contrary to his law. But when the *Chaldeans* were gone to meet *Pharaoh*, the general opinion being, that they would return no more, the Jews openly violated the covenant of reformation, by obliging all their servants to return to their former servitude: for which impious act, the Prophet proclaimed liberty to the sword, &c.

J E R E M I A H xxxvii. Ver. 11—16.

WHEN the *Chaldeans* were gone to meet *Pharaoh*, *Jeremiah* was released out of prison; and intending to retire to *Anathoth*, from the calamities of the siege, which he knew would be renewed, was taken up for a deserter as he was passing through the gate, and clapt in prison; but principally for persisting that the city should again be besieged and taken by *Nebuchadnezzar*.

J E R E M I A H xxxii, xxxiii.

WHILE *Jeremiah* was in prison, the contents of these chapters were transacted.

E Z E K I E L xxix. Ver. 1—17. xxx.

UPON the approach of the *Chaldeans*, the *Egyptians* treacherously deserted *Zedekiah*, and returned into their own country. Upon this occasion, *Ezekiel* denounces the displeasure of God against their perfidy, predicts their desolation, and at length (within 40 years, chap. xxix. 13.) their being reduced to one of the basest of nations, insomuch that they should no more have a prince of their own to reign over them. Chap. xxx. 13. Which hath been remarkably fulfilled, even unto this day. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad Annum* 598. *Zedekiah* 10.

J E R E M I A H xxxvii. Ver. 17, to the end.

ON the retreat of the *Egyptians*, *Nebuchadnezzar* returned to the siege of *Jerusalem*; and it was then king *Zedekiah*, fearing the issue, sent for *Jeremiah* out of prison to consult him.

J E R E M I A H xxxviii. Ver. 1—14.

THE princes, offended at *Jeremiah*, cast him into a low, loathsome, miry dungeon, where he must have perished, had not *Ebed-melech* gained leave to draw him out, and to place him in a better situation in the court of the prison.

J E R E M I A H xxxix. Ver. 15th, to the end.

WHILE *Jeremiah* was in the court of the prison, God by him sent a message of mercy and deliverance to *Ebed-melech*.

J E R E M I A H

J E R E M I A H xxxviii. Verse 14, to the end.

ZEDEKIAH again sent for *Jeremiah* out of the court of the prison into the temple, there secretly to enquire of him about the issue of the siege.

E Z E K I E L xxvi, xxvii, xxviii.

HERE God declares his judgments against *Tyre*, for insulting the calamitous state of *Jerusalem*, closely besieged by *Nebuchadnezzar*. Note—*Daniel's* wisdom, though but about 36, was become famous over all the East. Chap. xxviii. 3.

E Z E K I E L xxxi.

GOD declares his judgments against *Pharaoh* and the *Egyptians*.

J E R E M I A H xxxix. Ver. 1—11. lii. Ver. 1—30.

THE account of *Jerusalem's* being taken, with the subsequent circumstances. Upon this occasion the 137th Psalm was composed.

J E R E M I A H xxxix. Ver. 11—15. xl. Ver. 1—7.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR giveth charge concerning *Jeremiah* to *Nebuzadan*; who treateth him in a kind and friendly manner.

J E R E M I A H xl. Ver. 7, to the end. xli, xlii, xliii. Ver. 1—8.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR makes *Gedaliah* governor of *Judea*. *Ishmael* slays him. *Johanan*, &c. by force carry *Jeremiah* into *Egypt*.

C H A P. XXXV.

PROPHETS *after the Destruction of the Temple, during the*
CAPTIVITY.

JEREMIAH xliii. Ver. 8, to the end. xliv.

THE Prophecies contained in these Chapters were revealed, and published to the *Jews*, in the land of *Egypt*.

The Book of LAMENTATIONS.

THIS Book, which mournfully bewails the desolation of *Jerusalem* and the Temple, was composed by *Jeremiah* after that sad event, possibly in the land of *Egypt*; where *Jeremiah* might end his days; for we never hear of his return from thence.

E Z E K I E L xxxiii.

THE beginning of this chapter is upon a general subject, and of uncertain date. From the 21st verse it is dated from the time when *Ezekiel* first received the news of the city's being taken and destroyed, which was 18 months, or a year and a half, after the sad event happened.

E Z E K I E L xxxii.

THIS prophecy against *Egypt* was delivered in this year and month.

E Z E K I E L xxxiv, xxxvi, xxxvii, xxxviii, xxxix.

THESE chapters fall under no date, till we come to the 40th chapter, which is dated the 25th of *Jehoiachin's* captivity. Therefore, these chapters were probably delivered some time between the 12th and 25th of that captivity.

O B A D I A H.

OBADIAH prophesied against the *Edomites* for their unnatural and spiteful behaviour towards the *Jews*, in their distress at the taking of *Jerusalem*.

EZEKIEL

E Z E K I E L xxxv.

THIS prophecy against the *Edomites* seems to have been delivered upon the same occasion.

D A N I E L iii.

IN this year also *Nebuchadnezzar* set up his golden image. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. Anno 587. Nebuchad. 18.*

E Z E K I E L xl, xli, &c. to the end of the Book.

ALL these visions and prophecies, relating to the future state of the church of God, were revealed to *Ezekiel* this year, being the 14th from the destruction of *Jerusalem*.

E Z E K I E L xxix. Ver. 17. to the end.

NEBUCHADNEZZAR's army having endured great hardships in the siege of *Tyre*, which held 13 years, and having got little on the taking of it, (the inhabitants having conveyed themselves and their effects into the adjacent island) God, by the Prophet *Ezekiel*, promiseth them the spoils of *Egypt*, as a reward for their labour. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An. 573. Nebuchad. 32.*

D A N I E L iv.

THIS year *Nebuchadnezzar* had his dream of the wonderful great tree, and the cutting down thereof; and the next year fell distracted. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An. 570.*

J E R E M I A H lii. Ver. 31, to the end.

THIS year *Nebuchadnezzar* dies, and is succeeded by his son, *Evil-merodach*, who released *Jehoiachin*, king of *Judah*, out of prison, where he had been confined 37 years, and advanced him to honour and friendship. Note.—This last chapter was not wrote by *Jeremiah* (see chap. li. 64.) but by *Baruch* or *Ezra*, or whoever collected *Jeremiah's* prophecies into one volume.

DANIEL vii.

DANIEL had the vision of the four monarchies, and of the kingdom of the *Messiah*.

DANIEL viii.

DANIEL had the vision of the ram and he-goat.

DANIEL v.

DANIEL reads the hand-writing on the wall. *Belshazzar* is slain. *Darius* the *Mede* took the *Assyrian* kingdom.

DANIEL vi.

DANIEL's being advanced by *Darius* above all the princes, and made prime minister, next to the king, raised so great an envy against him among the courtiers, that they laid the snare for him which brought him to the lion's den.

DANIEL ix.

DANIEL, apprehending from the prophecy of *Jeremiah*, that the 70 years captivity of *Judah* were drawing to an end, maketh his prayer to God for the restoration of *Jerusalem*. In answer to which, the Angel *Gabriel* was sent to assure him of a much greater redemption to the *Jewish* nation by the *Messiah*, at the end of 70 weeks, or 490 years.

EZRA i, ii.

DARIUS dieth; *Cyrus* succeeds him, and by his decree puts an end to the 70 years captivity of the *Jews*. This in the first chapter of *Ezra*. In the second chapter an account is given of the *Jews* that returned. Note—On the return of *Judah* and *Benjamin* from the *Babylonish* captivity, several of the other tribes of *Israel* returned with them out of *Assyria*, *Babylon*, and *Media*; whither they had been before carried. *Ezra* vi. 17. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 536. p. 190. Upon this joyous occasion the 126th Psalm was composed.

EZRA iii.

THE *Jews* begin to rebuild *Jerusalem* and the Temple.

C H A P. XXXVI.

PROPHETS *after the CAPTIVITY under the second TEMPLE.*

E Z R A iv.

THE Samaritans obstruct the *Jews* in the building of the City and Temple: and so the work ceased till the second year of *Darius Hystaspes*; namely, for 14 years.

D A N I E L x, xi, xii.

THE visions and prophecies in these chapters were revealed to *Daniel* in the third year of *Cyrus*, and the third year after the Captivity.

H A G G A I i. Ver. 1—12.

HAGGAI excites *Zerubbabel*, the governor, and *Jeshua*, the high priest, to build the Lord's house, in the second year of *Darius Hystaspes*.

H A G G A I i. Ver. 12. to the end. E Z R A v. 1, 2.

ZERUBBABEL and *Jeshua* immediately apply to the work.

H A G G A I ii. Ver. 1—10.

HAGGAI encourages them from the Lord to proceed.

Z E C H A R I A H i. Ver. 1—7.

ZECHARIAH makes his first address to the *Jews*, who were building the Temple, assuring them that God would turn to them with a blessing, if they turned to him by repentance and reformation.*

H A G G A I ii. Ver. 10. to the end.

HAGGAI rebukes the indifference of the *Jews* in building the Temple; encourages vigorous endeavours with the blessing of plenty; and assures *Zerubbabel* of the extraordinary favour of God.

Z E C H A R I A H

ZECHARIAH i. Ver 7. to the end. ii, iii, iv, v, vi.

AT this time these visions, greatly encouraging the *Jews* in building the City and Temple, and assuring them of the Divine protection against all their enemies, were revealed to *Zechariah*.

EZRA v. Ver. 3. to the end.

THE *Samaritans* again disturb the *Jews*, and put a stop to the building of the Temple.

EZRA vi. Ver. 1—15.

DARIUS sends a decree to *Jerusalem*, positively ordering the Temple to be rebuilt, and the expences of it furnished out of the taxes of the provinces. Which accordingly was done, till it was finished. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 518.

ZECHARIAH vii, viii.

The *Jews* who were in *Babylon*, (for great numbers still remained there, and in other parts of the *Persian* empire,) judging that the state of *Judea* and *Jerusalem* was now so thoroughly restored and established by *Darius's* decree, that it might be no longer proper to keep the fast in the fifth month (when the City and Temple were burnt by *Nebuzaradan*), which they had hitherto observed for 70 years together, sent two messengers to *Jerusalem*, to ask the opinion of the priests and prophets that were there, about this matter. And God gave them, by the Prophet *Zechariah*, the answer relating to that and other fasts, which we have in the seventh and eighth chapters of his prophecy.

ZECHARIAH ix, x, xi, xii, xiii, xiv.

As these chapters have no date, we may suppose they were delivered in some of the times subsequent to the fourth year of *Darius Hystaspes*.

EZRA vi. Ver. 15. to the end.

THIS year the Temple was finished, and dedicated with great joy and solemnity. The *Jews* had been about it, from first to last, 20 years.

ESTHER i.

ARTAXERXES, or *Abasuerus*, being thoroughly settled in his throne, made a great feast for all his nobles, and divorced *Vashti* his queen.

ESTHER ii. Ver. 1—16.

A collection of virgins made for the king, of which *Esther* was one.

EZRA vii, viii, ix, x.

IN the beginning of this year *Ezra* received from *Artaxerxes*, or *Abasuerus*, a very ample commission for his return to *Jerusalem*, with any of his countrymen that were disposed to go along with him; giving them full authority in things both civil and religious, to regulate both according to the law. This decree was probably granted at the solicitation of *Esther*. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 458. The decree, the families and numbers of the *Jews* that went with *Ezra* to *Jerusalem*, fall within the compass of this and the next year, and are contained in the four last chapters of this Book.

NOTE—From *Ezra's* entering upon this work, the beginning of *Daniel's* 70 weeks is to be computed. Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 458, p. 377. Note also—That *Ezra* continued in the government about 13 years; till *Nehemiah* succeeded him in the 20th year of *Artaxerxes*, or *Abasuerus*.

ESTHER ii. Ver. 16—21.

ESTHER, after having been only concubine about two years, is now made queen.

ESTHER ii. Ver. 21. to the end.

BIGTHAN and *Taresh*, two eunuchs in the palace, entered into a conspiracy against the life of *Artaxerxes*, or *Abasuerus*, which was discovered to the king by *Mordecai*, queen *Esther's* uncle.

ESTHER iii, iv, v, &c. to the end of the Book.

HAMAN, an *Amalekite*, descended from king *Agag*, in *Saul's* time, made prime minister to *Artaxerxes*, laid a plot to extirpate the whole race of the *Jews*. But it turned upon himself, as related in the book of *Esther*.

NEHEMIAH

NEHEMIAH i, ii, iii, &c. to the end of the Book.

NEHEMIAH, with a commission from *Artaxerxes*, or *Abasuerus*, probably by favour of queen *Esther*, (Neh. ii. 6.) succeedeth *Ezra* in the government of *Judea*, rebuilds the walls, repeoples *Jerusalem*, reforms disorders, &c. Thus he was employed for 12 years; namely, from the 20th to the 32d year of *Artaxerxes*. Neh. v. 14. xiii. 6. Within which time *Ezra* is supposed to have published his edition of the Hebrew Scriptures. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con.* p. 475, &c.

Nehemiah returns from *Jerusalem* to the *Persian* court. Neh. xiii. 6.

MALACHI i, ii, iii, iv.

ABOUT this time flourished *Malachi*, the Prophet. See Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. ad An.* 428. p. 570.

NEHEMIAH xiii. Ver. 6, 7, &c.

AFTER certain days, i. e. after about five years, *Nehemiah* comes again to *Jerusalem* with a new commission, and makes further reformation: with which act of reformation, the holy Scriptures of the Old Testament are closed up.

Simon the just, high priest of the *Jews*, completes the Canon of the Old Testament, by adding the two Books of *Chronicles*, *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, *Esther*, and *Malachi*. "That these could not be put into the Canon by *Ezra*, is plain: for four of those books are, upon just grounds, supposed to have been written by *Ezra* himself, (that is, the two books of *Chronicles*, and the Books of *Ezra* and *Esther*,) and the Book of *Nehemiah* was written after his [*Ezra's*] time; and so most likely was the Book of *Malachi* also. And therefore a later time must be assigned for their insertion into the sacred Canon; and none is more likely than that of *Simon the just*, who is said to have been the last of the men of the great synagogue. What the *Jews* call the great synagogue, were a number of elders, amounting to 120, succeeding each other in a continued series from the return of the *Jews* from the *Babylonish* captivity, to the time of *Simon the just*, and laboured in restoring the *Jewish* church and state in that country. In order to which, the holy Scriptures being the rule they were to go by, their chief care and study was to make a true collection of those Scriptures, and publish them accurately to the people. *Ezra*, and the men of the great synagogue in his time, settled the Canon of all but the foresaid books; and those were probably settled, and added to the Canon, in the times of *Simon the just*, who died about 31 years after *Alexander the Great*. For in 1. *Chron.* iii. 19, &c. the genealogy of the sons of *Zerubbabel* is carried down for so many descents after him as may well be thought to reach the times of *Alexander*. And in *Neh.* xii. 22. we have the

“ days of *Jaddua* spoken of, as then past; but *Jaddua* outlived *Alexander* two years. These passages, therefore, were probably inserted by
 “ *Simon the just*, who perfected, and finally settled the Canon of the
 “ holy Scriptures. After this followed the *misnical* times, that is, the
 “ times of traditions. Hitherto the Scriptures were the only rule of
 “ faith and manners which God’s people studied; but thenceforth tra-
 “ ditions began to be regarded, till at length they overbore the word
 “ of God itself, as we find in our Saviour’s time. The collection of
 “ these traditions they call the *misnah*, that is, the second law; and
 “ those who delivered and taught them were stiled the *misnical* Doc-
 “ tors.” See Dr. PRIDEAUX’s *Con. Anno 292. Ptolemy Soter, 13.*

C H A P. XXXVII.

The State of the JEWS, and of other NATIONS, at the Time when our Lord came into the World.

AFTER the *Babylonish* captivity the *Jews* no more lapsed into idolatry, but remained steady in the acknowledgment and worship of the one living and true God. Even then they fell into new ways of perverting religion, and the wise and holy intentions of the Divine law. I. By laying all the stress on the external and less momentous parts of it, while they neglected the weighty and substantial, true holiness of heart and life. Mankind are too easily drawn into this error; while they retain a sense of religion, they are too apt to listen to any methods by which it may be reduced to a consistency with the gratifications of their passions, pride, and avarice. Thus, by placing religion in mere profession, or in the zealous observance of rites and ceremonies, instead of real piety, truth, purity, and goodness, they learn to be religious without virtue. II. By speculating and commenting upon the Divine commands and institutions, till their force is quite enervated, and they are refined into a sense that will commodiously allow a slight regard instead of sincere obedience. III. By confirming and establishing the two former methods of corrupting religion, by tradition and the authority of learned Rabbies; pretending that there was a system of religious rules delivered by word of mouth from *Moses*, explanatory of the written law, known only to those Rabbies; to whose judgment, therefore, and decision, all the people were to submit.

This, in time, the space of 219 years, became the general state of religion among the *Jews*, after they had discarded idolatry; and this spirit prevailed among them for some ages (290 years) before the coming of the *Messiah*. But, however, it did not interfere with the main system of Providence, or the introducing the knowledge of God among the Nations,

* Turn to the Appendix, for the Chronological Dates belonging to this and chapters xxxiv. xxxv.

tions, as they still continued steadfast in the worship of the true God, without danger of deviating from it. Besides, they were now, much more than formerly, exercised in reading, thinking, and reasoning, and were more capable of themselves of judging what was right. *Luke xli.* 57. And several of them did so judge. Some of them were truly religious and virtuous; and all of them had strong expectation of the *Messiah* about the time of his appearance; and were sufficiently qualified to judge of religious matters, and of the evidences of his mission. Thus the *Jews* were prepared by the preceding dispensation for the reception of the *Messiah*, and the just notions of religion which he was sent to inculcate; inasmuch that their guilt must be highly aggravated, if they rejected him and his instructions. It could not be for want of capacity, but of integrity, and must be assigned to wilful blindness and obduracy. Out of regard to temporal power, grandeur, and enjoyments, they loved darkness rather than light.

In the mean time, the Pagan Nations had made great openings in wisdom and virtue. Those arts that began in *Greece*, had travelled into other lands; learning had got footing among the illiterate, and humanity and social affections among the barbarous; and many good and useful books, useful even to this day among Christians, were written in ethics for the right conduct of life. The light of nature was carried high; or rather, the darkness of it was much enlightened. Such was, at length, the state of the *Gentiles*, God having still been pleased, from time to time, to raise up among them persons uncommonly endowed, for their instruction, and to fit them for the day when he should more explicitly reveal himself and his sacred will to them. In a word, what with time, and the transmigrating of knowledge from region to region, and the labours of poets and philosophers, men, at about the *classic æra*, when our Lord came into the world, in general, had gained tolerable just ideas of virtue and moral truth; and so, were in a condition to apprehend and embrace the higher and more important truths of God, and his providence, and a future state.

For many ages the *Jews* had been well known in the eastern empires, among the *Assyrians*, *Chaldeans*, *Medes*, and *Persians*; but till the time of *Alexander the Great*, they had no communication with the *Grecians*. About the year before Christ 332, *Alexander* built *Alexandria* in *Egypt*; and, to people his new city, removed thither many of the *Jews*, allowing them the use of their own laws and religion, and the same liberties with the *Macedonians* themselves. The *Macedonians*, who spake the *Greek* language, and other *Greeks*, were the principal inhabitants of *Alexandria*. From them the *Jews* learned to speak *Greek*, which was the common language of the city, and which soon became the native language of the *Jews* that lived there; who, on that account, were called *Hellenists*, or *Greek-Jews*, mentioned *Acts* vi. 1—9. xi. 20. These *Greek-Jews* had synagogues in *Alexandria*; and for their benefit, the five books of *Moses*, which alone at first were publicly read, were translated into *Greek*, (by whom is uncertain) and read in their synagogues every sabbath-day. And in the time of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, about 168 years before *Christ*, when the Prophets also began to be read in the synagogues of *Judea*, the Prophets also were translated into *Greek* for the use of the *Alexandrian Jews*.

This translation contributed much to the spread of the knowledge of true religion among the Nations in the western parts of the world.

For the *Jews*, their synagogues and worship, were, after *Alexander's* death, dispersed almost every where among the Nations. *Ptolemy*, one of *Alexander's* successors, having reduced *Jerusalem* and all *Judea*, about 320 years before *Christ*, carried a hundred thousand *Jews* into *Egypt*, and there raised considerable numbers of them to places of trust and power; and several of them he placed in *Cyrene* and *Libya*. *Seleucus*, another of *Alexander's* successors, about 300 years before *Christ*, built *Antioch* in *Cilicia*, and many other cities, in all 35, and some of them capital cities in the Greater and Lesser *Asia*; in all which he planted the *Jews*, giving them equal privileges and immunities with the *Greeks* and *Macedonians*; especially at *Antioch* in *Syria*, where they settled in great numbers, and became almost as considerable a part of that city, as they were at *Alexandria*. Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. Anno* 293. *Ptolemy Soter*, 12. On that memorable day of *Pentecost*, *Acts* ii. 5, 9, 11, 12. were assembled in *Jerusalem*, *Jews*, devout men, out of every nation under heaven; namely, *Parthians*, *Medes*, and *Persians* of the province of *Elymais*, inhabitants of *Mesopotamia*, *Judea*, *Cappadocia*, *Pontus*, *Asia*, *Phrygia*, *Pamphylia*, *Egypt*, *Cyrene* in *Libya*, *Rome*, *Cretes*, and *Arabs*, who were all either natural *Jews*, or devout men. i. e. proselytes to the *Jewish* religion. And in every city of the *Roman* empire where *Paul* preached, he found a body of his countrymen, the *Jews*; except in *Athens*, which was at that time, I suppose, a town of no considerable trade. Which shews that the *Jews*, and their synagogues, at the time of our Lord's appearance, were providentially scattered over all the *Roman* empire; and had in every place introduced, more or less, among the nations, the knowledge and worship of God; and so had prepared great numbers for the reception of the Gospel.

About the time that *Alexander* built *Alexandria* in *Egypt*, the use of the *Papyrus* for writing was first found out in that country. Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. Anno* 332. *Darius* 4. p. 706. Vol. II. This invention was so favourable to literature, that *Ptolemy Soter*, one of *Alexander's* successors, was thereby enabled to erect a museum, or library; which by his son and successor, *Philadelphus*, who died 247 years before *Christ*, was augmented to an hundred thousand volumes; and by succeeding *Ptolemies*, to seven hundred thousand. Part of this library, which was placed in a separate building from the other part, happened to be burnt when *Julius Caesar* laid siege to *Alexandria*; but, after that loss, it was again much augmented, and soon grew up to be larger, and of more eminent note, than the former; and so it continued for many ages to be of great fame and use in those parts, till at length it was burnt and finally destroyed by the *Saracens*, in the year of our Lord 642. Dr. PRIDEAUX's *Con. Vol.* III. p. 21, &c. *Anno* 284. This plainly proves how much the invention of turning the *Papyrus* into paper contributed to the increase of books, and the advancement of learning, for some ages before the coming of our Lord; for doubtless, by this means, private hands would also more easily be supplied with books than before.

Add to all this, that the world, after many changes and revolutions, was, by God's all-ruling wisdom, thrown into that form of civil affairs which

which best suited with the great intended alteration. The many petty states and tyrannies whose passions and bigotry might have run counter to the schemes of Providence, were all swallowed up in one great power, the *Romans*, to which all appeals lay; the seat of which, *Rome*, lay at a great distance from *Jerusalem*, the spring from whence the Gospel was to arise, and flow to all nations. And therefore, as no material obstruction to the Gospel could arise but from that one quarter, none could suddenly arise from thence, but only in process of time, when the Gospel was sufficiently spread and established, as it did not in the least interfere with the *Roman* polity or government. The Gospel was first published in a time of general peace and tranquillity throughout the whole world, which gave the preachers of it an opportunity of passing freely from one country to another, and the minds of men the advantage of attending calmly to it. Many savage Nations were civilized by the *Romans*, and acquainted with the arts and virtues of their conquerors.

Thus the darkest countries had their thoughts awakened, and were growing to a capacity of receiving at the stated time, the knowledge of true religion. So that all things and circumstances conspired now with the views of Heaven, and made this apparently *the fulness of time*, (Gal. iv. 4.) or the fittest juncture for God to reveal himself to the *Gentiles*, and to put an end to idolatry throughout the earth. Now the minds of men were generally ripe for a purer and brighter dispensation, and the circumstances of the world were such as favoured the success and progress of it.

In this very time the *Messiah* came: nor, for ought I can see, could he have come more opportunely at any other; because the world was at no other preceding time so well prepared to receive his doctrines. As to remission of sin, and eternal salvation, it is all one whenever he came: because the sacrifice which he offered for sin, had its effects with regard to the time past, as well as to the time to come; to the penitent, that were dead, as well as to the living, or those that were yet to be born. (See *Scripture Doctrine of Atonement*, p. 80.) Immortality must belong as much to those who lived virtuously, according to their degree of light, before the *Messiah* came, as to those who lived after his coming; and the blessedness of the future state, though not alike revealed, yet was alike accessible to the one as to the other.

Upon a review of the whole, it will appear, that the condition of mankind was bettered step by step, as the reason and nature of things directed and would permit. The scope and intendment of the whole scheme of Divine Providence, in all its various dispensations, was to bring human nature, by proper degrees, and in a way consistent with moral agency, to all the beauty, holiness, and perfection it can, in this present state, attain to. And though we are not indeed able absolutely to trace all the reasons of the Divine conduct, and to demonstrate the wisdom of it in every particular; yet we may in general discover, that all the parts of this scheme were wisely formed, and pursued, depending regularly on each other, leading to the same great and good end, and adapted to the respective circumstances and condition of mankind.

Note—After the publication of the Gospel, the *Jewish* peculiarity was no longer of use for preserving the knowledge of God in the world.

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That end would be much better answered by its dissolution, and the dispersion of the *Jews* all over the earth, as they are even unto this day, [For the most excellent character of *Jesus Christ*, and the Divine principles, doctrine, and spirit of the Gospel, see my *Treatise upon the LORD'S SUPPER*.]*

C H A P. XXXVIII.

Mankind, having abused their Natural POWERS, stand in need of an Extraordinary REVELATION.

THE Scriptures are the word of God; they are the language and address of the universal Father to his children in this world, whom he hath endowed with rational faculties to hear and understand his voice. The Scriptures are given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. 2 Tim. iii. 16. The glory of God indeed is to be seen in all the works of his hands; and the speech of his Almighty power, wisdom, and goodness, is to be heard in the appearances of creation which are daily before our eyes. *Psal.* xix. 1, &c. Mankind, in a faithful use of their natural Powers, might, without any other guide, know God. *Rom.* i. 19. *For that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them (for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, so) that even the Heathen, who have no other rule but the light of nature, they might be without excuse, if they are totally ignorant of God. But how much Mankind in all ages have abused and misapplied their understandings, is notoriously evident; and therefore it must be evident how much they stand in need of an extraordinary Revelation to correct their errors, to reduce them to the obedience of God, and to secure them from relapsing into idolatry and apostacy from him.*

I think, no book can contain more evident marks of such a Revelation than the Scriptures, eminently so called, which we are happily possessed of. There we have the fullest and clearest account of the nature and perfections of God, beyond what the world at best could have attained to, and far beyond what could, in the ordinary course of things, have been preserved through succeeding generations. The knowledge

• With this chapter ends Dr. TAYLOR'S SCHEME of SCRIPTURE-DIVINITY, from the copy he printed at *Warrington*, for the use of the Students in the Academy there; and since corrected, with the Hebrew and Greek words inserted, by himself.

The following chapters the EDITOR hath annexed, and are printed from Dr. TAYLOR'S Manuscript; and would have appeared to greater advantage, had they had his correcting hand.

of God not being a mere speculative truth, but having near connexion with our morals, would consequently, as the morals of men are very liable to be corrupted, have also proportionably been obscured, till it had in a manner quite vanished away; which we know hath in fact been true. In the Scriptures, as in a durable storehouse, not to be demolished by time, or uncertain tradition, we have the most noble discoveries of the nature and perfections of God, as he is our Maker, our Father, Owner, Ruler, and daily Benefactor; as he is glorious in all his attributes; as he is infinite, and independent, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, knowledge, wisdom and power; as perfectly holy, good, righteous, and true. And these glories of the Divine nature are described, not in the way of philosophical dissertations, not by a series of abstract reasoning, which, how amusing or instructing soever to minds of a more refined turn and taste, are but of little service to the bulk of mankind, who have but little leisure, and perhaps less inclination, to attend to the curious and abstruse deductions of reason; not thus are the glories of the Divine nature delineated in Scripture, but exhibited in a long and easily-intelligible series of facts and events, wherein God hath manifested his goodness, wisdom, power, and justice, from the beginning of the world. In which way the mind, with very little labour of thought, is at once convinced of the being and perfections of God, and struck with admiration, reverence, love, and every right affection which the knowledge of God should produce in us.

In the Scriptures any one, in common life, may not only very readily see that God is, and that he is all that the most learned, the most exact, the most subtle, the most sublime philosophy, all that the utmost application and study of the wisest men can discover; but he seeth this at the same time in a practical light; he seeth that God is all this to us; that, as great as he is in himself, he is our God and Father; that he hath, from his own immensity of being, given us being, a noble and distinguished kind of being; that he constantly regards us, loveth us, interests himself in our affairs, is concerned for our welfare, is daily near us, the object of our trust and dependence; that all our safety is in his favour; and that in his favour, and under his protection, we are infinitely safe and happy: that we are accountable to him for our actions, that we are continually under his eye, and can flee no whither from his spirit and presence; that we ought always to set him before us, to act as in his sight, and to approve ourselves to his all-searching eye; that he hath taken us into the nearest relations to himself; that his design is to make us good, in order to make us for ever happy; that, for this purpose, he hath been carrying on various dispensations, from the beginning of the world, to invite and draw men unto himself.

At length, in the fulness of time, in that time which to his infinite wisdom seemed most expedient, he sent a divine messenger, the word; his only begotten Son, from his own bosom, to redeem men from iniquity, to reconcile them to God; and in the way, Divine wisdom judged most proper to establish, upon the most firm and beautiful foundation, the eternal salvation of all pious and virtuous men that have ever been, or shall hereafter be in the world. The eternal God in Christ will be their everlasting strength, and joy, and glory. Thus, I would observe,

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we not only, in the easiest and clearest way, learn God and his perfections from Scripture, but we learn them in a manner the most proper and powerful to engage and unite our hearts to God, to warm and quicken our spirits, to excite us to the love and obedience of God, and to consider ourselves infinitely interested in his attributes and perfections; which is to learn divine things, i. e. the most excellent things, in a method vastly superior to all the reasonings and instructions of the best and wisest philosophers.

In the Scriptures, any man of common sense may not only with ease learn his duty in the fullest extent; but at the same time, by the numerous examples of pious men in all ages, he may see that it is practicable, and may see how to engage in it; how exact, how constant, how ready and cheerful he should be in the discharge of it; how he ought to resist temptations, to struggle with difficulties. Even a mean capacity, by reading the Scriptures, shall at the same time discern the reasonableness and the beauty of holiness, and also be furnished with the strongest arguments and motives to embrace it, and to persevere therein; shall be assured of the Divine assistance and protection in a religious course; shall find the most proper consolations and encouragements in every the most distressed state of affairs; to every precept he shall find an adjoined promise; and his duty will shine brightly before his eyes, in the light and hope of everlasting glory.

There we have the truest and most effectual rules for forming our minds into all habits of virtue; not simple propositions, declaring what we ought to do and be, but rules of life intermixed with the power and splendour of Divine grace, working mightily to renew us into the Divine nature. There religion appears in all its truth, lustre, sweetness, and majesty. There it is dressed in all its charms; not as a sour, severe, morose, gloomy principle, forbidding enjoyment, and the parent only of sorrow, horror, and despair; but as our life, our glory, our peace, our joy; as giving us the truest relish and enjoyment of life, as the source of the most solid pleasure and comfort, as uniting us to God, as lodging us for ever in the Almighty arms of his love and goodness; as leading to, and preparing for, endless joys and pleasures in his presence.

As to sin and wickedness, the philosophers have said much concerning the odious nature of vice; that it is evil, and the worst of evils; that it is the disease and deformity of the mind, hurtful to the health of the body, and ruinous to the reputation and estate. Their reflections were so far just, but the benefit of them was confined to men of letters and study; the vulgar received little or no advantage from them: but in the Scriptures, the meanest minds are favoured with far better instructions than they could give. There sin is not only set forth in all its odious colours, and in all its pernicious effects, as to this present life; but its deadly nature is demonstrated as it stands in contrariety to God, as it is the transgression of his holy law, as it exposeth us to his displeasure, and disqualifieth us for his blessing; as it is opposite to all the ends of our creation, and consequently as deserving of death. That God will punish all the impenitent workers of iniquity with everlasting destruction, and purge out of his kingdom every thing that offends, that is either mischievous or polluting. And all this is so plainly and power-
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fully inculcated upon the mind, by many dreadful examples of the Divine vengeance upon ungodly men, throughout the whole series of Scripture-history, by so many express declarations of God's wrath, and so many exhortations of his goodness and mercy, to turn from every evil way, that no one, who carefully and seriously reads the Scriptures can miss, not only of seeing the evil, the irregularity and deformity of sin, but of having his mind affected with it, and wrought into the most rational and the most settled detestation of it.

With regard to the pardon of sin, the wisest of philosophers seem to have very imperfect notions of it. They rarely and very superficially considered it in its relation of dissonancy to the Divine perfections; and therefore say little or nothing concerning the placableness of the Deity, whether God would pardon sin, or in what way his wisdom thought proper to do it. Sacrifices were frequent among them; but they seem to have understood nothing of their true nature and end, nor were at all solicitous to inquire into them. In truth, they did not understand the true demerit of sin, and therefore of course must be in the dark as to the remission of it. But all these things are open and obvious to the weakest capacity, in Scripture.

How much the world was in the dark about a future state without a Revelation, is well known; and how clearly now the world to come is opened to us in the awful prospects of eternal happiness, or endless perdition, can be concealed from none who are ever so little acquainted with the Gospel of Christ. — These things, duly attended to, will shew us the admirable excellency of the holy Scriptures; that God's word is truth, and able to make us wise unto salvation; and further to demonstrate, that it is our duty to be much in reading them.

Reading the Scriptures is one of the first principles of our religion, as we are Christians, because our profession is built wholly upon the Scriptures. We justly own no other rule of our faith but the word of God. *Eph. ii. 20. We are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.* And we are built upon no other foundation. If we are true Christians, however we may use or value the writings of men, we make not them, not the best of them, the rule of our faith, but the word of God alone. But that rule ought to be thoroughly perused, and digested; otherwise, how good soever in itself, or how much soever we profess to take it for our rule, it is in fact no rule to us. The word of God is the guide of our actions; *it is a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path.* *Psal. cxix. 105.* Should we not then diligently study the word of God, that we may not wander from his commandments? The word of God is the spring of all our comfort and hopes.

There, and there alone, we have the rich and immense treasure of the Divine promises; and from thence alone we can draw solid support and consolation, in any dark hour of trial and affliction. In short, to all the valuable purposes of knowledge and life, the Scriptures do infinitely excel all human compositions whatsoever. They are but as the twinkling stars to that ocean of light which is poured out daily from the body of the sun. Of all the means of knowledge and wisdom in the world, I know nothing to be compared with the word of God. The reason of the

the thing therefore requires we should have our eyes intent upon this light and illumination. For this end God hath given us this invaluable treasure, the holy Scriptures, that we should make them our study.

It must be observed carefully, that it is not enough to be much in reading the Scriptures; but while we read, we should employ all our attention to understand them. The Scriptures may be understood, but evidently not in every degree by every man; for as there are various sorts and degrees of knowledge in Scripture, some perhaps, at present, beyond the reach of any man that ever yet was in the world; and as there are in men various capacities, and degrees of learning; so it is manifest, all men cannot attain to the same degree of understanding in divine things: but there must necessarily be a great difference between the knowledge of one man and another in matters of faith and revelation. This shews the absurdity of the Popish scheme, which pretends to reduce the Christian faith in all its parts to a certain invariable standard, to which every man either explicitly or implicitly, either with or without understanding, must conform.

This shews, how much soever it is our duty to communicate knowledge one to another, that it is quite contrary to true religion to quarrel with one another, or to be displeased because we have not all the same degree of understanding in matters of faith and religion; because this, according to the present constitution of our minds, and of the Revelation God hath given us, which he never intended should be equally understood by all, is quite impracticable. But although the Scriptures are not to be understood in every degree by every man, yet they may be understood by every man so far as God requireth, i. e. so far as he is capable of understanding them; for what a man can understand, he may understand, if he is not wanting to himself.

And as God can require of no man beyond his abilities, so no more than what a man can understand of Scripture is to him a rule of faith and practice; for what he cannot understand, he cannot be bound to believe or do. Further, those things in Scripture which are of the highest importance, and most conducive to a holy life, are generally very easy to be understood; and therefore, how perplexed soever those other things may be about which men have differed, though not so perplexed in Revelation as they are in men's heads and writings,—yet, I say, how perplexed and difficult soever they may be, the grand principles of faith and practice are so evident, that any ordinary capacity may, with due care and attention, easily gain the most comfortable knowledge of them. Thus the Scriptures may be understood.

So far as they are not understood, they are at least useless to us. Nay further, the Scriptures misunderstood may prove very hurtful to us. The things chiefly to be understood in Scripture are *principles*, or the grounds and reasons of things, and *precepts* which are the rules of duty: now, if we mistake either, we shall throw all into confusion, our way will be all mist and clouds; that which should be light will be darkness, or, which is all one, a false light to mislead us; that which should be our joy, will be our heaviness; that which should be our comfort, and inspire cheerful hope, will be a dead weight to burthen our spirits and clog our course. Our path, which should be as the shining light that shineth more and more, will be a gloomy melancholy road, and we shall

shall make our way with difficulty, because we want that true sense and knowledge of the ways and will of God, which is necessary to give life, comfort, and vigour. Chimeras and frightful images will terrify our consciences, and fill us with groundless fears; God will be painted in monstrous colours; and all the ravishing glories of his truth, wisdom, and love, which should powerfully draw our hearts to him, will be hid from our eyes. The lustre of redeeming grace will in part, or wholly, be eclipsed. Some parts of religion will be superstitiously magnified, while others of greater consequence will be undervalued.

Further, if for want of due attention to the sense of Scripture we mistake and fall into error, we ought to be sensible, that religious error is of a far worse nature than any other; not only as it is error in a matter of the greatest importance, but as it is of all others the most difficult to be corrected. For under the sacred name of religion it shelters and defends itself, and gains the character of truth, of important, necessary, awful, and perhaps excellent truth; and the unwary think themselves bound in conscience and duty to maintain it with zeal; and then, whoever endeavours to correct it, though ever so much in the spirit of meekness and peace, must do it at his peril. Hence those grosser instances of persecution and bloodshed which have souled the Christian name; hence those wranglings, debates, heats, animosities, which have destroyed Christian societies. These things are the fruit of men's taking their religious principles upon trust, and not fetching them from the Scriptures, studied, and understood by themselves. Such contempt and neglect of the word of God exposeth them to strong delusion, and such religion leads them to fight in the dark for they know not what. Thus religion is corrupted, the corruption of it defended, and irreligion and infidelity propagated, even by religious people themselves. So the sceptic, who is indifferent to any principles, when he finds absurdity mixed with the Christian faith, taking the whole for a true account of Christianity, rejects the whole; for even common sense will not allow that Revelation to be divine, which cannot, in many of its parts, be reconciled with the known perfections of God.

By this unhappy means what numbers in our land have been drawn into Deism! And, by this unhappy means, I guess, if the truth were known, religion appears but in a doubtful light to many who seem to be strict professors of it; for where it is not received in its proper evidence, there cannot be, I think, a full and strong assent of faith; and no man can receive it in its proper evidence, who doth not endeavour carefully to understand the Scriptures.

Thus many who talk much of the word of God, and pretend a great reverence for it, may possibly at the last day be ranked among the despisers of it; because, although they have, perhaps, been much in reading of it, they never set themselves in good earnest to understand it, and so in effect might as well not have read it at all; for their reading of it is only from a superstitious opinion, as *Turks*, and *Jews*, and *Papists*, turn over the books in reputation among them, not from the love of truth, not with a desire to understand the truth; that most people suppose they understand before they read their bibles, or however without reading their bibles; not to open their eyes, and to give them
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a more just and distinct view of the ways and dispensations of God; such things they learn from other books; not to confirm and establish their minds in the faith of God and of Christ; not for those purposes, I fear, are the Scriptures read, but only in a customary, superstitious, or however in a very careless, superficial way: and therefore there are so few Christians that grow in grace, that rise in spiritual strength, peace, love, and joy, because there are so few that grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. *2 Pet. iii. 18.*

The full knowledge of Christ most people presume they have attained long ago; and to talk of knowing more of Christ, or in a clearer and more rational way, is perfectly shocking to them. They have somewhere or other fixed the precise standard of Divine knowledge, and either more or less than that standard of theirs is impious and heretical. How then can they grow in the knowledge of Christ? How can they set themselves to understand the Scriptures, who in another way, as they think, have already gained the whole sum and body of spiritual understanding? See *Rom. xv. 4. Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, for our instruction, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.* We have hope through that patience and comfort which is taught in the Scriptures; but the grounds and reasons of that patience and comfort must be understood, otherwise we cannot establish in our minds a sure and solid hope. Hence it is that the Christian hope, that faith and hope which overcometh the world, is so great a rarity; therefore so few rejoice in hope, because so few understand the Scriptures, which are the ground of the Christian hope. Lastly, because the Scriptures are but little understood, therefore they are so little valued. We delight not in them, because we know so little of them.

Let it be remembered, that we shall have the benefit of the Scriptures by studiously endeavouring to understand them. Then shall we know if we follow on to know the Lord. So far as we understand the word of truth, we shall be truly enlightened, our consciences will be rightly directed, and all our principles well established; we shall see its real excellency, and it will accordingly be valued and esteemed; we shall taste its comforts, feel its power, be convinced of its Divine original, and it will be pleasant and precious to us. The more we understand of the Scriptures, the more we shall with pleasure see the righteousness, wisdom, and goodness of all the Divine dispensations, that all of them are adjusted and settled by the love of a Father, and calculated to promote our happiness. This will draw our hearts to God, and shew us the infinite reasonableness of comporting with the constitutions of his grace.

If we are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, our faith will stand upon a sure bottom, and not upon the weak, precarious judgment of man; henceforth we shall be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, *Ephes. iv. 14.* but shall by use have our senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Thus we shall with our own eyes see the truth, and be instrumental in preserving the purity of our religion. Thus we shall grow up into Christ in all things, in knowledge, in faith, and love. Thus we shall be rooted and grounded in love, in the love of God, of truth, and of our

our neighbour. The knowledge we gain, whether it be more or less, being drawn from the true fountain, will compose our spirits, and incline us neither to despise the weakness of those that know less, nor to reject the instructions of those that may know more than ourselves.

These weighty considerations should engage us to read the Scriptures with all possible care and diligence, to study them with an upright desire to gain their true sense and meaning. We all know how much men are at variance about the sense of Scripture, one affirming that this, another that that is the true sense. So it may well be expected to be in our present weakness; and so God hath permitted it to be; not to give us occasion to censure, judge, and disparage one another, as is too common, for this is expressly forbidden; but this variety of sentiments is permitted, to teach us to cease from man, and should convince us that we ought not to resign our understandings or consciences to any man's judgment whatsoever.

C H A P. XXXIX.

The History of REVELATION, and some OBJECTIONS to it answered.

I SHALL consider, first,

The authority and original of holy Scripture; and then,
The use and importance of it; it is *profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*. 2 Tim. iii. 16. and so is profitable for the noblest purposes, the enlightening of our minds, the purifying of our hearts, the regulating of our practice, and the saving of our souls.

As to the authority and original of holy Scripture, it is said, by a very good and sufficient judge, that it is *given by inspiration of God*. How we are to understand being given by inspiration of God, the Apostle PETER will inform us, 2 Pet. i. 20, 21. *Knowing this, says he, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation, sense, or impulse; meaning, that no prophecy did issue or proceed from the private sense or thoughts of the writer; it was not giving a loose to his own conceits and imaginations. For, as it follows, the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Ghost; or by the holy Spirit of God, enlightening their minds, and directing them what to say. Thus the Scriptures are inspired, they are the word of God; and what is contained in them, we are to understand and reverence, as spoken by God himself. But then, in the strictest sense, this is to be understood only of what Prophets, as Prophets, have delivered to us; such as Moses, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the rest.*

No prophecy of Scripture did proceed from the private sense of the writer, but was dictated by the spirit of God. But as for the historical writings, though, doubtless, they owe their original to the special Providence of God, yet it is sufficient to suppose that they were wrote by men of probity, fully acquainted with the facts which they relate.

This premised, I should now advance a few arguments to establish the authority and excellency of the Scriptures, that they were indeed given by inspiration of God, or that in them holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Spirit. But to prepare the way, it is necessary I should give a general account and history of Revelation; then remove some Objections which are levelled against it, as if it were needless, too partial, or too ineffectual, to be consistent with the Divine goodness; or as if we were not sufficiently secure, that we now have in possession those very books entire and perfect, in which Revelation was originally recorded.

Revelation is that which makes known to us the will and ways of the most high God, the Father of the universe, the Fountain of all being and happiness, upon whom we have a necessary dependence for life, for understanding, and knowledge, for well-being, and enjoyment, at all times and in every respect; for without him we cannot live, we cannot breathe, we can have no kind or degree of sense and understanding. This is true. And it is equally true, that the best and most beneficent of Beings, the greatest and the kindest of all Fathers, could have no other end or design in creating mankind, but his own glory, and their happiness. The chief end of man must be to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever; for perfect goodness cannot be conceived to propose any lower end in making a creature so noble and excellent. But then it is certain, both from the holiness of God, and the nature of an intelligent rational being, that a character of holiness and virtue, of obedience, righteousness, or right conduct, is necessary, on our part, to our enjoyment of God, or our happiness in his favour and blessing. It is necessary that we love the great Author of our being, that we pay him all due honour and obedience, that we are dutifully submissive to his will, that we understand our dependence upon him, and what we have to expect from him, that we may be excited to gratitude, and a due improvement of his benefits.

We cannot love, honour, and obey God, unless we know him, and are acquainted with him; nor can we possibly have any knowledge or understanding, of any kind whatever, but what must come originally from God. Therefore, that God, our Father, should instruct and teach his creatures, whom he has made for the highest and noblest ends, in those things which immediately relate to his glory and their happiness, is perfectly consonant to his goodness and love. And that Infinite wisdom, the Lord and Proprietor of all Being, should have various ways of making known himself and his will to us, is also perfectly true. He hath produced a great variety of creatures with different powers and instincts in our world, by them to shew that he can bestow upon us any kind or degree of being; he hath displayed his immense greatness, power, wisdom, and goodness, in the numberless glorious bodies which, by his hand, are perpetually rolled about us in the heavens. His continually providing

providing for our subsistence, in a way which is quite out of our power, plainly demonstrates our absolute dependence upon him, and obligations to him. This is the book of nature spread before all nations, and legible to every understanding; in which every attentive mind may read the perfections of God, and the main duties which we owe him. But, to him who made our senses and minds, and is always intimate to them, there must be many other possible ways of making known his will to us; as by an audible voice, a vision, or secret impressions upon our spirits. Therefore, to believe that God, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake to the ancient fathers by the Prophets, is believing a thing very possible, reasonable, and fitting.

And it is no improbable supposition, that in the earliest ages of the world, God should only communicate his will to pious men, and leave them to hand it down to others by tradition; for in those days the longevity of mankind favoured this manner of conveyance. With our grand parent *Adam*, *Methuselah* lived 243 years; with *Methuselah*, *Shem* the son of *Noah* lived about 97 years; and with *Shem*, *Jacob* the son of *Isaac*, the son of *Abraham*, lived 50 years, as appears from the history of *Genesis*. So that no more than three persons, *Methuselah*, *Shem*, and *Jacob*, were sufficient to hand down the knowledge and worship of the true God from *Adam* to the time when the children of *Israel* went down into *Egypt*, that is, through the space of 2238 years. But when the life of man was reduced to the narrow period of fourscore years, and the world on all sides was fallen into various sorts of corruption, and idolatry and ignorance of God generally prevailed among the nations, tradition evidently ceased to be a safe mean of conveyance.

It was then the Divine wisdom judged it a proper time to erect a peculiar kingdom, church, or congregation, in the world; and for its illumination gave the knowledge of his will and worship in writing, by the hand of his servant *Moses*; that by such writing, or scripture, divine truth might more easily be preserved, be further spread, and, when lost, more easily restored. This must be acknowledged a wise and proper expedient. After the time of *Moses*, God was pleased to give Revelations to the subsequent Prophets, as occasion required; till in the fullness of time, the great Prophet, the Son of God, came into the world, opened a new dispensation, and all the treasures of the Divine grace, which had not before been so clearly made known to the church and people of God. And what he and his Apostles taught is also committed to writing, and completes what we call the Canon of Scripture.

This is the general account and history of Revelation which I proposed to give. And we may here observe, that a written Revelation and the church of God are co-existent; that is to say, at the same time the church was brought into the world, the Scriptures were brought into the church; and both are so essentially connected, that take away the one and you take away the other. Take away the Scriptures, and we are reduced to the state of mere nature; our charter is destroyed, and our polity, as we are God's church and kingdom, is overthrown. We may indeed, possibly, pretend, as the Papists do, that we are, though deprived of the Scripture, still a church; yet without the Scriptures, as

our rule and foundation, we are not the church of God, but under a different head, it may be the Pope, or some other usurped authority. But this by the bye.

I shall now remove some Objections which may be levelled against Revelation in general.

It is pretended—*To be quite needless, nature and reason being sufficient to direct any man in the plain way of his duty, without any supernatural assistance.* I answer—It must be allowed, in general, that nature and reason are sufficient to direct any man in the way of his duty, so far as God, in his circumstances, expects duty from him; for God expects duty from every person only in proportion to the light he enjoys, and to the talents he hath received. But the experience of all mankind shews that nature and reason, by themselves, will advance but a little way in the knowledge of Divine things. Gentlemen in a land like ours, where, in spite of themselves, their nature and reason is enlightened and directed in a considerable degree by Revelation, may talk of the perfection and sufficiency of nature and reason.

If we look into those nations which are perfect strangers to Revelation, we shall find them grossly ignorant of the being, unity, and perfections of God, the dispensations of his Providence, the proper honour and worship that is due to him, the prayers we may address to his goodness, and the hopes we may entertain of his acceptance. They know nothing of the pardon of sin, the promises of God's mercy and blessing, nor of any thing belonging to the covenant of his love, the present privileges, or future glory of his kingdom. The resurrection from the dead, the day of judgment, the immortal life, which will be the reward of piety and virtue, and the death everlasting, which will be the sad lot of all the impenitentially wicked, they are altogether, or in a great measure, unacquainted with. But all these are great principles in religion, and of great force to purify our spirits, ennoble our minds, animate our hopes, and guard us against the influence of bodily appetites, and the violence of temptation.

And however others may fare, in a great degree of darkness and ignorance, through the favourable allowance of God, yet surely every man's reason will tell him, that superior knowledge, and a more extensive view of the Divine dispensations, is absolutely necessary to a higher degree of goodness, comfort, obedience, and devotedness to God. What the poets relate may be true, that some primitive mortals subsisted only upon acorns and water, in dens and caves; and we know there are some parts of the world where the naked inhabitants enjoy very few conveniences of life; but shall we therefore despise the blessings of agriculture, and the various accommodations which make life happy and comfortable, and say they are needless? Would any man in *England* ever think of turning out naked into the fields and woods, because it is possible, and may somewhere in fact be true, that men may live upon wild fruit and water, without clothes, or any habitation but the dens and caves of the earth? Corn and other agreeable food, clothes, and commodious habitations, fitted up with proper furniture and utensils, are necessary to our kind and degree of life in the natural world; and so is Revelation to a corresponding kind and degree of spiritual life. The

food, raiment, and habitations we enjoy, are the gift of God's goodness, and it is our duty to accept and use them with thankfulness. In like manner, Revelation is the gift of God, and, as such, it ought to be received; and as it gives greater light, we are obliged to attend accordingly to it, because we must, in the nature of things, be accountable for it.

I may add upon this head, that however nature and reason, in their pure and most perfect state, may be sufficient to direct in the way of duty, yet, when nature is corrupted, and reason obscured, or almost quite extinguished, they are by no means sufficient to restore and recover themselves to the knowledge and obedience of the truth; because they themselves, who should be the physician to heal themselves, are sick and disabled. But it was the primary intention of Revelation to restore and preserve the knowledge of God and of his will in a corrupt and degenerate world.

So far therefore I see no objection against Revelation, but it may be both very needful, and a very great blessing to mankind.

It may be said—*If this blessing was given to all mankind, who all equally stand in need of it; but whereas it is confined only to a part of mankind, while others are left to grope in the dark, how can it be accounted the gift of Divine goodness? For is not God equally the God, Father, and Saviour of all men? How then can it be consistent with his beneficence to confine the light of Revelation to some, which would so much contribute to the happiness of all? May we not then conclude, that a partial Revelation is no Revelation from God, nor worthy of our regard?*

I answer—It is very certain that God is the Saviour of all men, that he is good to all, and that his tender mercies are over all his works. But while we are sure of this, we are not equally sure that our reason is a perfect rule for adjusting the distribution of his benefits: on the other hand, we may be sure that it is not. From the lowest to the highest degree of existence, from a grain of sand to the most glorious Angel in heaven, every higher degree of being is an incontestable proof that God may very justly, according to his own wisdom and good pleasure, bestow what gifts, endowments, privileges, and advantages upon his creatures he sees fit. He is debtor to none. Our understanding is no measure of his wisdom, neither are his dispensations to be censured by our narrow and imperfect judgments. And methinks, we may as well make it an objection against the goodness of Divine Providence, that all men are not rich alike, wise alike, or knowing and learned alike.

Would you not think him a very foolish man, who should be displeased that God has made him rich, and placed him in easy circumstances, because there are many about him in a poor low condition? Who refuses wealth, or objects against plenty, because his neighbours are pinched, and make but a hard shift to get a living? Or who can be so absurd, as to reckon his superior knowledge and learning to be no valuable advantage, because there are numbers of illiterate persons, who are much below him in understanding? or that the possession of reason is no blessing, because there are so many idiots to be found among mankind? Or can you suppose there are any of the angelic body, or of those

spirits who excel us in all endowments and happiness, who despise their own blessings and heavenly felicity, as no gifts of the Divine bounty, because we in this earth are not set upon a level with them? And is it not as foolish and absurd to deny Revelation, or to argue against it, as improperly bestowed, and unworthy of the Divine goodness, because indeed it is not communicated to all the world, as well as to ourselves? It is very unnatural to dispute against God's goodness in any shape, and very presumptuous to direct him how to bestow it, either as to quantity, quality, or extent. If it is fact that he has given us any blessing, our duty surely is to be thankful, and to enjoy and improve it, whether he has bestowed more or less upon our fellow-creatures; being certain, where less is given, less will be required; and that the Judge of the whole earth will, in the last day, deal with all in perfect equity and goodness. But,

If Revelation is such a blessing, surely it would appear in the fruit or effects of it. Whereas great numbers, if not the generality of those who enjoy Revelation, are as bad as the very heathen, who are strangers to it. And such evils have been produced, such variance, discord, and bloody persecutions, on account of revealed religion, that it may justly be questioned, whether it has not done more harm than good. What reason then have we to say, it is a valuable gift, or worthy of the Father of the universe?

To this I reply——That natural causes, by a sort of necessity, produce their proper effects; so fire always burns combustible matter, and a good medicine heals a disease; and that is no fire which will not burn proper matter, nor that a good medicine which never heals a disease. But moral causes are of a different nature, because their efficacy depends upon the choice and disposition of the subjects to whom they are applied; and therefore a moral means, or cause, may be in itself most excellent, though it happens to produce no good effect; nay, though accidentally it may prove the occasion of very bad effects. Our Lord's ministry and doctrine was perfectly divine, and yet it had but small influence for good upon the Jewish nation; nay, on the other hand, excited their malice to that degree, that they slew the Prince of Life.

Whatever effects therefore Revelation may have produced in the world, still it is true, that it is a valuable gift, and worthy of the Divine goodness. But it must ever be remembered, that it is absolutely necessary to our receiving any benefit from Gospel means, that we be truly desirous to shake off the yoke of sin, and to cultivate and improve our minds in virtue and true holiness. If therefore we expect there is any life or power provided in the Gospel, which will anticipate our own thoughts and concerns, or that will begin to work upon our minds, and excite them to thoughtfulness and care, whilst we ourselves are thoughtless and unconcerned, we shall but deceive ourselves. For sure I am, there is nothing in the Gospel that encourages such an expectation: on the contrary, such an expectation is utterly inconsistent with the grand design of revealing the grace and mercy of God; which is, to awaken our consciences, and to excite us to care and diligence in our spiritual concerns.

The notion I have just now mentioned, manifestly tends to lull us asleep in security and indolence; and encourages to go on in the con-

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tempt of God and our own salvation; or in any of the paths of folly and sin, upon a presumption that we can never turn out, till we are constrained by some uncertain, unaccountable act of Almighty power. True indeed, our own thoughts, desires, and endeavours, will effect but little, without the help of Divine power: but yet, if we choose to live in ignorance, unbelief, or any branch of impiety and wickedness; if our hearts are so attached to the world, so engrossed by business, sensual pleasures and amusements, that we can spare no serious reflections for God, our souls, and a future world; I cannot see how we should be saved by any grace which the Gospel has provided in Jesus Christ.

It is certain, the Gospel hath produced many good effects, and will always do so, where it is received and attended to. For as for those pretended Christians who make it the occasion of variance, hatred, and persecution, we cannot, with any justice or propriety, say, that they do receive or attend to Revelation; nay, it is very certain that in fact they do not. Nor must we allow, that in Popish countries, where corruption of manners greatly prevails, and superstition, idolatry, and persecution are established, they enjoy the benefit of Revelation, when we know, that for many ages the use of the Scriptures hath been forbidden, and a religion taught and professed, which is quite foreign to the word of God.

But how can we be sure, that we have now in possession, those very books, entire and perfect, in which Revelation was originally recorded? May they not in length of time be lost, or quite altered from what they were at first? or so varied and changed by transcribers and translators, that we can never be sure that we have the true and genuine sense of Scripture?

I answer—No nation in the world can be more sure of any of their public acts and records, preserved in their archives with the utmost care, than we are of the truth of the Scriptures now in our hands. The Jews preserved the book of *Moses*, as the laws of their kingdom, in the most sacred part of the tabernacle and temple; those books, the Psalms and Prophets, were every where publicly read in their synagogues, every week, on the sabbath-day; their learned men, with the utmost exactness and scrupulosity, inspected and guarded the text, even so far as to count the very number of letters in every book. In short, our Lord and the Apostles frequently quote *Moses*, the *Psalms*, and *Prophets*, without any intimation that those books were in any respect altered or depraved. Whereas, had they indeed been corrupted, we need not doubt but our blessed Saviour would have reformed that as well as, or rather, more than any other instance of corruption among the Jews.

From our Lord's time, the Scriptures of the Old Testament were publicly read by the Jews in all parts of the world; and those Scriptures, and the Apostolic writings, as they came out, were read by Christians every where in their assemblies, and dispersed over all the world, where the religion of Jesus was professed, as containing the laws and rules of the religion he taught: insomuch that it was impossible to corrupt or deprave them. And for that reason, even the church of ROME, or those who erected that Antichristian power, never durst attempt to make the least alteration in the Scriptures, as knowing it would be to no pur-

pose; but instead of that, they claimed the sole right of interpreting the Scriptures, which served their ends full as well as corrupting them. For he who hath power to put what sense he pleases upon a law, may as effectually make it void, as he who destroys it.

And as for transcribers, or translators, it is for the same reason impossible they should make any material alterations. And it is in fact true, that they have not; for you may take any translation, in any language, or by any party among Christians, Papists as well as Protestants, and you will find they all agree in all things relating to the covenant of the Lord our God, and the several duties to which we are thereby obliged, though they may differ in some things, and Commentators may put their own sense upon others. But the main things, I am well satisfied, have been preserved pure and entire in every translation, from the beginning to this day.

Thus the Objections against Revelation in general, which are all that I have heard of, are removed, I hope to satisfaction. Upon the whole, they seem to me to proceed not from a sober mind, sincerely desirous of the best knowledge and instruction; for how can one allow him to be a true scholar, or sincerely desirous of improving in useful learning, who, meeting with a book excellently adapted to that purpose, refuses to make use of it, because he is already possessed of the faculty of reason, or because it is not in the hands of every body, or because some have made a bad use of it, or because he doubts whether it may not have undergone some alterations; when the book, in itself considered, is an excellent performance, and capable of giving him the most profitable instruction?

The Bible, as we now have it in our hands, thanks be to God, is by far the most excellent book in our language; and, as we have it in our translation, is in itself, setting aside all circumstances, a pure and plentiful fountain of Divine knowledge, giving a true, clear, and full account of the Divine dispensations, and particularly of the Gospel of our salvation. So that whoever studies the Bible, the English Bible, is sure of gaining the knowledge and faith which, if duly applied to the heart and conversation, will infallibly guide him to eternal life. For which reason it is our wisdom and duty, to be much in reading and meditating upon the Bible, that our minds being well furnished with heavenly wisdom, and our hearts tinged with a Divine Spirit, we may be prepared for glory, honour, and immortality,

C H A P. XL.

That the Scriptures are given by INSPIRATION of God, appears from the express and frequent Assertions of Moses, the Prophets and Apostles.

I HAVE already given a general account and history of revelation; and have shewn that it is perfectly consonant to the goodness and love of God, to the relation in which we stand in to him, and the high and glorious purposes for which he has given us our being; and that he committed revelation to writing at a very proper time, when the shortness of human life, and the general corruption of the world, rendered tradition no longer a safe mean of conveyance; and when the kingdom or peculiar congregation he had erected, required a standing light for the preservation of divine truth.

I have likewise endeavoured to remove some objections against revelation in general.

On this head I would beg leave to repeat, that never were any books more publicly and commonly known, being read and heard with the greatest reverence once every week, in both *Jewish* and *Christian* assemblies, for a very long tract of time, the Old Testament before the coming of our Lord, and the Old and New after his coming, to this very day. So that it is, in the nature of things, impossible that the holy Scriptures should be adulterated; nor could any man, who had a mind to alter or corrupt them, promise himself success in an attempt which must immediately be detected, and confounded, by thousands of copies every where dispersed, and constantly read before numerous assemblies, in the various languages of even more nations than ever composed the Roman empire in its largest extent.

Transcribers may indeed make literal mistakes, but those are easily corrected by a variety of manuscripts; and translators may differ in giving the literal sense of some words and phrases, but not so as to render the main subjects and substance of the Scriptures either obscure or uncertain. For you may take any translations in any language, or done by any party among Christians, and you will find they all agree in all things relating to the covenant of the Lord our God, the state of things in a future world, and the several duties to which we are obliged, though they may not render the letter of the text in the same words, nor with the same propriety of expression. The more perfect and exact in all things any translation is, the better it is; but I am very sure, that all things pertaining to the dispensations of God, his grace and promises, and our hopes and duty, have been preserved pure and entire in every translation, from the beginning to this day. And this is abundantly enough for our instruction, comfort, direction, and edification.

Gentlemen in foreign business, who do not understand foreign languages, are obliged to carry it on by the help of translations; and if a letter in *Italian*, *German*, *Spanish*, or *French*, was put in the hands of twenty translators, there are great odds but every translation would differ,

differ, more or less, in some expressions. The same words or phrases would hardly be rendered in the same manner by every one of the translators; and yet they might all agree with respect to the sense of the merchant: and that being all this correspondent wants to understand, he will never think it worth his while to enter into minute particulars, or a critical propriety of phrases, which have nothing to do with his business. Just so it is with reference to the translation of the Bible. In above the space of an hundred years, learning may have received considerable improvements, and by that means some inaccuracies may be found in a translation more than a hundred years old. But you may rest fully satisfied, that as our English translation is, in itself, by far the most excellent book in our language, so it is a pure and plentiful fountain of Divine knowledge, giving a true, clear, and full account of the Divine dispensations, and particularly of the Gospel of our salvation; insomuch that whoever studies the Bible, the English Bible, is sure of gaining that knowledge and faith which, if duly applied to the heart and conversation, will infallibly guide him to eternal life.

[But you may say, how then comes it to pass, that learned men differ so much about the sense of Scripture? I answer—They differ not so much about the literal sense, or translation of Scripture, as about the construction which they put upon the literal sense. For example, all are agreed that those words, *Take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you*, are rightly and well translated; but the question is, what is the meaning of them? The Papist will tell you, they mean, that the bread in the Lord's-supper is really turned into the body, soul, and divinity of Christ; the Protestant very justly denieth the monstrous and idolatrous absurdity, and affirms, that the bread is only a figurative representation of Christ's sacrificed body. Translators are generally pretty well agreed, but divines differ very much about the sense of Scripture, which may afterwards be considered.]

Thus, by demonstrating the reasonableness and expediency of revelation in general, by removing objections against it, and by shewing the sufficiency of the translation, which, thanks to God, is in all our hands, the way is prepared—

To advance a few arguments to establish the authority and excellency of the Scriptures; that they were indeed given by Inspiration of God, or that, in them, holy men of God spake as they were moved by the holy Spirit.

We have sufficient reason to believe that we have in our hands the very books that were written by *Moses*, by the Prophets, and by the Apostles of Christ. Now, that those books were given by Inspiration of God, or that the persons who wrote them have delivered to us what they received from heaven, will appear—

From their own express and frequent assertions. *Moses* and the Prophets always declare they spake in the name of the Lord, and delivered to the people what they received in commission from him; the Apostles likewise assure us, that they were taught by Jesus Christ, the Son of God, were endued with the Spirit of God, and commissioned by him to preach the Gospel to all nations. And we have all the reason in the world to believe they have told us the truth; for, if they have not, they

must be very bad, designing men, who solemnly and publicly fathered upon God, constitutions, laws, doctrines, and declarations which they knew very well were false and fictitious, the creatures of their own invention, obtruded upon the world to serve some selfish, sinister purposes. But, for any thing we can see, they appear to be persons of the highest character for honour and probity. In the whole of their conduct we find the utmost integrity and disinterestedness, and in every part of their history and writings the utmost simplicity and impartiality.

We may carry this argument further, and set it in a still stronger light in the case of the *Prophets*. For if, when they declared they spake in the name of God, and by a commission from him, they declared a falsehood, they must certainly know that it was a falsehood; and if they knew it was a falsehood, they were not only very wicked, but even void of common sense. For the Prophets, in a long series one after another, got nothing by speaking in the name of the Lord, but scorn and contempt from the generality of their countrymen. When they entered upon the ungrateful office, they renounced all worldly views, and were harrassed and persecuted in proportion to their fidelity in executing it.

Now this is too much by far for any pious fraud to bear, even in the case of a single person, much more in a series of succession of men in several generations. An impostor, like *Mahomet*, may carry his pretences very high, but he can never bear the furnace of persecution: that terrible scourge will either silence his false and arrogant claims, or force him to take up arms, if it is in his power, for his own vindication and security. But the Prophets were naked men, who, without the least dependence upon worldly power or policy, opposed nothing but a divine commission to very unkind and severe usage. Now there is nothing to be found in human nature, or in any supposable state of things, that can possibly account for this conduct, but either that really they had a divine commission, or else that they were disordered in their heads, and had lost their senses. But their writings prove they were men of good sense, and of a sound and excellent judgment; therefore, nothing remains but that they really acted by a divine commission.

The force of this argument will be seen even still more evidently in the case of the *Apostles*. No history in the world has been better preserved than that of the New Testament. There we find that Jesus Christ had gathered, while he was upon earth, some hundreds of Disciples, who all of them made profession of faith in him immediately after his death, declaring that he was risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven. Particularly, the Apostles, with several others, went about preaching the Gospel, first in *Judea*, then in all parts of the *Roman* empire, persuading men to believe in Christ, affirming that he was the Son of God, that all the wonderful things related of him were true, and that they had a commission from Heaven to teach, spread, and propagate his religion every where, though they knew they should every where meet with the most violent opposition, and the cruelest treatment. Now, they must either be fully convinced in their own minds that their assertions were true; or, if they knew that the Gospel, and their commission to preach it, was a forgery, we must conclude they were distracted, and

and had lost the use of understanding and reason. For supposing our blessed Lord never did or said any of those things which the Apostles repeated; and that they had no instructions or commission from him to preach the Gospel, then we must suppose they entered into a foolish and frantic confederacy after this manner:—

“ Men and Brethren, what that seducer was, who lived among us the other day, and how justly he suffered death for his vile imposture, we, of all men living, have most reason to know; and though others, who were less intimately acquainted with him, and his ways of deceiving, might have some opinion of his worth and honesty, yet we, who were the daily companions of his conversation, saw nothing in him answerable to the greatness of his pretensions, but that his design was, by all the boldest arts of craft and hypocrisy, to get a name in the world: and therefore let us enter into the most solemn agreement to propagate the belief of this notorious cheat among mankind, and to feign all manner of lies in its confirmation; to aver that we saw him restore eyes to the blind, ears to the deaf, and life to the dead; and though it be all false, yet let us confidently report and assert it to be the very last drop of our blood.

“ And because, after all his great and glorious pretences of being no less than the Son of God, he was at last executed as a vile malefactor, with all the circumstances of shame and dishonour, we must agree among ourselves upon some story to wipe off this disgrace. Let us therefore resolve to affirm, with undaunted steadiness, that after he was thus dishonourably crucified, the third day he rose again; often conversed with us, in the same familiar way as he had always done before his execution; and that, after a while, we saw him ascend up into heaven. But then, we must be sure to stand unalterably to this bold falsehood, and persevere to death itself in the assertion. For what absurdity is there in throwing away our lives, with no other prospect than that of final perdition? And why should any man think it hard to suffer stripes, bonds, imprisonments, reproaches, dishonour, and death itself, with this view only?”

This, or something like it, must be the sense and resolution of the Apostles and first preachers of the Gospel, upon supposition they knew and believed that the Gospel, and their commission to preach it, was a forgery. In this case, a set of men in private and low life, without any manner of worldly power or interest; in the certain prospect of all manner of opposition, of sacrificing all that is dear and valuable in life, of suffering all manner of indignities, tribulations, and cruelties, and of exposing themselves to all the terrors of death; must agree together to propagate throughout the whole world a system of falsehood, knowing it to be such, directly contrary to their own consciences, and to all their interests both in this and a future world.

None but a company of madmen, seized with the most extravagant frenzy, and void of all sense and reason, could possibly join in such a design. Whereas, if we peruse their writings, we shall find that the Apostles were men of the finest sense; not only in full possession of understanding, but endowed with knowledge and wisdom in a degree far beyond the most eminent philosophers, or masters of reason, that ever
had

had been in the world. They had a surprising acquaintance with God and the perfections of his nature; they set the dispensations of his wisdom, and the grand designs of his love, in the clearest and most amiable light; they well understood the whole system of morality, and fixed every branch of it upon its proper foundation: upon principles either self-evident or allowed, they demonstrate and establish the whole scheme of the Gospel. The Apostles were so far from being void of common sense, that they were, in fact, men of the best sense, of the most accurate and sublime knowledge, of the most excellent and divine spirit, next to their Lord and Master, that the world ever was acquainted with. Therefore their espousing and asserting the Gospel with so much zeal could not proceed from any disorder in their heads.

There remains then but one other cause to which it can possibly be assigned, and it is this, that they were fully persuaded of the truth of what they reported. And if they were fully persuaded of the truth of what they reported, then it follows, that what they reported was certainly true. They were fully satisfied that it was true, and they were perfectly capable of receiving the clearest evidence, and fullest satisfaction; for observe, what they reported was not a matter of mere opinion, as in the case of *superstition*, nor a warm suggestion or secret impulse upon their minds, as in the case of *enthusiasm*, but bare simple matter of fact. *We cannot, say they, but speak the things which we have seen and heard.* Acts iv. 20. They were things, not which they conceived, or fancied, but which all of them, which great multitudes of all sorts of people, had often and openly, for the space of three or four years together, seen with their eyes, and heard with their ears. And that they were not mistaken, or deceived, they were so fully satisfied, that they ventured all they had in the world, and life itself, upon the truth of what they had heard and seen. Consequently, their assurance must be in the highest and fullest degree of satisfaction, leaving no room for doubt or uncertainty.

However some nowadays may cavil and object, it is certain the Apostles, who were the familiar companions of our Lord, had not the least scruple or difficulty about any thing related in the Gospel. They were perfectly satisfied they saw Christ upon earth; that they conversed with him; that they heard the gracious words which proceeded from his mouth; that they saw him work all his miracles; that they saw him crucified and dead; that they saw him alive again within a few days; that they heard him give then a commission to preach the Gospel to all nations, and promise them success; that they actually saw him ascend up into heaven; that the Holy Ghost actually fell upon them on the day of Pentecost; and that by his influences they actually felt themselves endowed with new and miraculous powers, which accompanied them during the course of their ministry. And, to their being fully persuaded of the truth of these things, and to no other possible cause, can we assign their steady and zealous endeavours to publish and spread the Gospel every where.

Add to all this, that the Apostles were surprisingly successful in preaching the Gospel. These men in private and low life, these defenceless men, quite destitute of all temporal power and interest, only by the force of

of truth, the truth of the Gospel which they preached, and the power which they received from their Master, after he was gone to heaven, encountered the fury of the multitude, the most inveterate prejudices of the whole world, the zeal of superstition, the hatred of the *Jews*, the contempt of the *Greeks*, the power of the *Romans*, the pride of the *philosophers*, and the policy of *statesmen*; all these difficulties they encountered, and surmounted them all. The doctrine they taught, like the sun, enlightened the whole world, in a manner, all at once; and infinite multitudes of people, both from city and villages, were, by the Apostles preaching, brought into the church, like corn into a granary.

All this, taken together, amounts to a sufficient proof, that the Apostles are to be credited when they affirm, that they received their instructions and commission from the Son of God; and upon the foot of this argument alone, I am, for my own part, as fully convinced that the Apostles were inspired by the Spirit of God, and that they have in their writings infallibly delivered the truth, in all things pertaining to the Christian faith and doctrine, as I am of any mathematical proposition, or that twice two is equal to four. The proof indeed is of a different kind, but fully convincing and satisfactory.

And if our Lord came from God to teach us the truth, and if his Apostles received from him their instructions, commission, and the holy Spirit, then it follows, that the books of *Moses*, and of the Prophets, are undoubtedly the word of God, and that the sacred history may be depended upon as a true account of things; for those books are not only asserted by our Lord, and his Apostles in general, to be the word of God, given by Divine inspiration, and a true rule of knowledge, faith, and doctrine, but particular passages are frequently produced in proof or confirmation of the doctrine they taught; and almost every single part of the history, from the beginning to the end, as of *Adam*, *Enoch*, *Noah*, the *Deluge*, *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, *Abraham*, the *Israelites*, and their miraculous deliverance from *Egypt* and settlement in the land of *Canaan*, and all the surprising events in their story, are referred to as true and authentic.

What Jesus Christ and his Apostles have reported and taught in the books of the New Testament, is certainly the truth, as they received it from God. And if so, then the Scriptures of the Old Testament are also given by inspiration of God, a storehouse of sacred and religious knowledge, of undoubted credit and veracity; for our Lord and his Apostles have represented and established them as such.

Thus the frequent and express assertions of *Moses*, the *Prophets*, and the *Apostles*, taken in connexion with their proper circumstances, is a proof of the truth of revelation as it stands in the Scriptures.

Let me recommend it to your serious consideration, that we certainly have in our hands an inestimable treasure, a revelation from heaven, a sure word of prophecy, shining as a light in a dark place; a magazine of the most excellent knowledge, clearly displaying the Divine nature and perfections, opening fully the dispensations of his wisdom and goodness from the beginning of the world, shewing the riches of his grace and love to mankind; delivering the most excellent precepts of wisdom, truth,

truth, and holiness, for the purifying our hearts, and directing our conversation; and proposing the noblest motives to engage us to, and encourage us in, the practice of all virtue and goodness. We cannot over-value this blessing, neither can we despise it without great guilt. We are accountable to God for the use we make of it. Let us esteem it in proportion to its worth, and study it as the rule of our life, as the grand source of our comfort and hope, and as an infallible guide to eternal glory.

C H A P. XLI.

The Divine Original and Authority of the Scriptures, proved from the Harmony and Agreement of the several WRITERS of them.

HAVING gone through the first argument, I proceed—To prove the Divine Original and Authority of the Scriptures; which we may do from the Harmony and Agreement of the several Writers of them.

They are not a book compiled by a single author, nor by many hands acting in confederacy in the same age; in which case there would be no difficulty in composing a consistent scheme, nor would it be any wonder to find the several parts in a just and close connexion: but the Scriptures were done by several hands, in very different conditions of life, from the throne and sceptre down to the lowest degree, and in very distant ages, through the long space of about 1500 years, when the world must have put on a quite new face, and men must have different interests to pursue; which naturally would have led a spirit of imposture to have varied its schemes, and to have adapted them to different stations in the world, and to the different turns and changes in every age.

David wrote about 400 years after Moses, and Isaiah about 250 after David, and Matthew more than 700 years after Isaiah; and yet these authors, with all the other Prophets and Apostles, write in perfect Harmony, confirming the Authority of their predecessors, labouring to reduce the people to the observance of their instructions, and loudly exclaiming against the neglect and contempt of them, and denouncing the severest judgments upon such as continued disobedient.

This was the principal work of the Prophets in a long succession. And it is well known our Lord came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets, but to fulfil, *i. e.* to vindicate and illustrate their meaning, to complete what was imperfect, and to answer the highest ends of what was typical and figurative. Now, this is a very strong proof that the Scriptures were throughout dictated by one and the same spirit, which could be no other than the Spirit of God, and of truth. It is allowed, as in the case of *Mahometism*, that an imposture, or religious fraud, may be

be handed down from one age to another, but not by several different persons, all making equal pretensions to a Divine authority and commission. For in this case they are to be considered, not as a succession of teachers, deriving their doctrine from one common original, but as single and distinct impostors; and consequently, every one in a distant age, and in a quite different state of things, would set up for himself, and seek a singular glory by building upon a distinct and separate foundation from others. It would signify little to an impostor, who has no other intention but to advance his own honour and renown, to pretend a commission from heaven, only to give reputation to another deceiver, by confirming what he has already established.

Therefore, as the Writers of the holy Scriptures, though they all claim a Divine Authority, yet write in perfect connexion and Harmony, mutually confirming the doctrine and testimony of each other, and concurring to establish the very same religious truths and principles, it is a strong proof that they all derive their instructions from the same fountain, the wisdom of God, and were indeed under the direction and illumination of his Spirit.

We may take another argument from ourselves, as we make profession of faith in *Jesus Christ*. For our profession of Christianity, who dwell in the uttermost parts of the earth, is a proof that the Gospel spread itself over all the *Roman* empire; for, from *Jerusalem*, it came to us by a gradual progress, and, advancing from one country to another, arrived at length in these islands of *Great-Britain* and *Ireland*. Nobody can doubt or deny that the Christian faith is, and for many ages past has been, embraced in all those numerous and distant lands which once composed the *Roman* empire, and even in countries far beyond the utmost bounds thereof. In all these spacious tracts the Christian faith, in one form or other, has been professed; and baptism and the Lord's-supper, in one form or other, have been administered, in a succession of ages, quite up to the times of the Apostles and our Lord.

It is most certain that baptism and the Lord's-supper, those summaries of the whole Gospel, were not instituted in any following age, by any one party of Christians, but have been handed down to us, and to all parties among Christians, from the very mouth and institution of *Jesus Christ*. No fact can be more evident than this. From our Lord therefore, and his Apostles, the Gospel spread over the greatest part of the known world, which before the publication of the Gospel was universally involved in idolatry, established by long custom and human laws, strongly guaranteed by all the power and learning of the world, by all the zeal of the wildest superstition, by all the violence and obstinacy of prejudice, by all the blindness of profound ignorance, and all the incorrigible perverseness of corrupt and dissolute manners: a complication of causes which would for ever have bid defiance to any philosophy or wisdom of the few that can be supposed to attain a better sense in the midst of universal darkness and depravity. But the Gospel gained a most complete and extensive victory over all these, demolished every idol in the heathen world, and every where erected the trophies of a conquering *Jesus*.

Now this surprising change, which is notorious to all mankind, must

be effected either by human power and policy, or by a divine and supernatural influence. By human power and policy great revolutions have been brought about in all ages and parts of the world; and therefore we do not wonder at the spread of the *Mahometan* or *Turkish* religion, as it was propagated by the sword, under the conduct of a mighty warrior and politician, who by ravages, bloodshed, and desolations, conquered many nations and kingdoms, laid the foundation of a potent and spacious empire, and thus by violence opened a way for the reception and extensive profession of his newly-devised religion. But the religion of *Jesus* was triumphant, not only without the aid of human power or policy, but even in direct opposition to it.

For the plain fact is this. A poor young man, about 30 years of age, called *Jesus*, a carpenter's son, of no education or learning, without house or habitation, without the least human interest or influence, begins to preach up reformation among the *Jews*, the most suspicious and bigoted people in the world; declares himself the Son of God; gathers a few Disciples, persons in the same low and naked condition with himself, fishermen, publicans, and such like, and sends them about preaching what he called the Gospel of the kingdom of God. He was despised by the generality, and greatly opposed and harrassed by the men of power and learning. However, he shifted for himself as well as he could; but, after he had preached three or four years, they caught him and crucified him as an infamous malefactor.

This direful event, which would have totally ruined an impostor, he plainly foresaw and foretold; but, not in the least discouraged by the prospect, he ordered his Disciples to go and preach his Gospel over all the world, promising that after his death he would assist them with power from heaven, in virtue of which they should certainly succeed. They believed him, they set out, they preached up their crucified Master as the Lord and Saviour of all mankind; and, which is very strange, under the conduct and influence of a master who was dead to this world, and gone to the other state, they prevailed; and in spite of the fury of the multitude, the most inveterate prejudices of the whole world, the zeal of superstition, the hatred of the *Jews*, the contempt of the *Greeks*, the power of the *Romans*, the pride of *philosophers*, and the policy of *statesmen*, their doctrine, like the sun, almost at once, enlightened the world, overthrew the whole system of Pagan idolatry and religion, and advanced as far as our own country in the darkest and remotest corner of the earth.

Of this we ourselves, we Christians, are living monuments and proofs: we have received the Gospel, we own it a glorious and shining light; we have renounced the idolatry and vain conversation of our fathers; we acknowledge and worship the living and true God; we confess and adore the crucified *Jesus*, our king and head, and hope for eternal life through him. Now, there is no possible way of accounting for this, but by allowing that *Jesus* really was the Son of God, that he really rose again from the dead, and ascended up into heaven, and that he actually from thence sent his Disciples the aids and powers which he had promised, and which were so far above all that is human, that they carried their own

evidence along with them, and rendered their doctrine so surprisingly successful.

And as *Jesus* did not send his Disciples to preach to all the world, till after his death, and as he then, after his death, did actually furnish them with all miraculous powers to render their doctrine effectual, this is the most conceiving proof that his doctrine was divine, and that he himself was actually gone to heaven, and lived there in the highest interest and favour with God. For that an impostor, a deceiver, hateful to the God of truth, should, after his death, be able to animate, instruct, authorize, and empower a company of men, otherwise destitute of all assistance, and labouring under all possible difficulties, to throw down all the religions of the world, and to erect a new one in their stead, is utterly impossible. It is therefore certain, beyond all doubt, that *Jesus Christ* was sent from heaven to reveal the Gospel to the world. And as we are very sure that we have in our hands the writings of his Apostles, we may be as sure, that they contain a revelation from heaven, or that doctrine which *Christ* received from God and delivered to his Disciples. And if so, then the writings of the Old Testament are also the word of God, for *Christ* and his Apostles declare them to be such. Therefore all Scripture is given by inspiration of God.

The same thing may be proved by the long train of miraculous operations which could be effected only by a Divine power, and which were wrought in confirmation of the mission of Prophets and Apostles; as also from the spirit of prophecy predicting future events at a great distance of time, which no human wisdom or sagacity could possibly foresee, and yet were actually and punctually fulfilled in correspondence to the prediction. But as a minute detail of particulars would perhaps be somewhat tedious, I shall single out one instance of the Divine miraculous power, and the truth of the prophetic spirit; which instance has been in all ages a standing proof of revelation, and which still exists, and is before the eyes of the present generation, in almost all countries of the world; I mean, the present state and being of the *Jews*. For this people, as they were originally chosen to be the repository or storehouse of Divine knowledge, by the revelation which was given to them, so they were also intended to be visible proofs of the truth of it in all ages and parts of the world. Our Lord, contrary to all human probability, while he was on the earth, foretold the destruction of the Jewish temple and polity, and their dispersion among all nations, which was exactly accomplished in about 40 years after. And in this dispersed state they have now continued about 1700 years, in great numbers, and in great ignominy and contempt, and yet quite distinct and separate from all the people among whom they lived.

This appears to me a standing miracle; nor can we attribute it to any other cause but the will and extraordinary interposition of heaven, when it is considered, that of all the famous nations of the world who might have been distinguished from others with great advantage, and the most illustrious marks of honour and renown, as the ancient *Egyptians*, *Affyrians*, *Persians*, *Macedonians*, *Romans*, who all in their turns held the empire of the world, and were, with great ambition, the lords of mankind;

mankind; yet these, even in their own countries, are dissolved into the bulk of mankind, nor is there a person upon earth can boast he is descended from those renowned and imperial ancestors.

Whereas a small nation, generally despised and hated, and which, though now upon pretty good terms with us, both *Pagans* and pretended *Christians* have for many ages treated with the utmost insult, indignity, outrage and cruelty, and which therefore, one would imagine, every soul that belonged to it should have gladly disowned, and have been willing to have lost the odious name by mixing with any other nation; yet, I say, this hated people, harrassed and butchered more or less by all mankind, banished and bandied from one country to another, and who scarce had any peace till trade and traffic brought the world to a better temper, and more favourable treatment of them—I say, this hated people have, under all temptations to the contrary, and against the ordinary course of things, continued in a body *distinct* and *separate* from all mankind, even in a state of dispersion, for about 1700 years.

This demonstrates, that the wisdom which formed them into a peculiar people, that they have almost ever since the deluge, for about 3600 years, remained in a distinct and separate state, and are still likely to do so, is not human, but Divine; for no human wisdom or power could form, or however could execute, such a vast, extensive design. It must be the wisdom and power of that God alone, who is the same in every age, and who in every age has exercised a peculiar providence over his peculiar people, the descendents of *Abraham* his servant. And thus the present state and being of the *Jews* is every where a public and standing evidence of the truth of revelation, in two respects.

1. With respect to their long dispersion, or captivity, as they call it, and the various calamities they were to suffer therein.

This is foretold in several places, particularly, *Deut. xxviii. 63, 64.* *The Lord will rejoice over you to destroy you, and bring you to nought, and he will overthrow you, and will bring you to the land of the enemy, and ye shall be plucked off from the land, whither ye go to possess it. And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from one end of the earth even unto the other—and among these nations thou shalt find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest; and the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing eyes, and sorrow of mind. Ezek. xxxvi. 19. I scattered them among the heathen, and they were dispersed among the countries. I will scatter thee among the heathen, and will disperse thee among the countries. And our Lord predicts, *Luke xxi. 24.* *And they, the Jews, shall fall by the edge of the sword; and shall be taken away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles.**

2. With respect to their being preserved in their dispersion, and preserved as a distinct and separate body, this also was plainly predicted. *Jer. xxxvi. 44.* *Yet for all that, when they be in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, neither will I abhor them, to destroy them utterly, and to break my covenant with them. Jer. xxx. 10, 11. Fear not, O my servant, Jacob; neither be dismayed, O Israel; for so, I will save thee from afar, and thy seed from the land of their captivity; for though I make a full end of the nations, whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee,*

thee. Jer. xxxi. 10. *Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off; and say, he that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock. Ver. 35, 36, 37. Thus saith the Lord, who gives the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night; who divides the sea when the waves thereof roar: the Lord of Hosts is his name. If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord. Rom. xi. 25, 26. Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in: and so all Israel shall be saved; as it is written, there shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob.*

These, and many more passages, too numerous to be now quoted, plainly shew that it was the design of Divine Providence to preserve the Jewish nation, in their dispersion, and to preserve them a distinct and separate people in order to their future restoration. And we, and many other nations, at this day, see these predictions made good in the present state of the *Jews*, who have been so long, and still are miraculously preserved separate from all other people. Now this is, in my opinion, a standing miracle, a wonderful work of Divine Providence, and as strong a proof of revelation, as if we were to see the dead, every year rise out of their graves in confirmation of it. For we have still among us, after so long a time, and so many various revolutions in human affairs, the peculiar people whom God, above three thousand years ago, separated unto himself; the very people who are the principal subject of revelation, and who are said there to be the principal objects of his providence; and we see them at this day to be so in a very surprising manner.

Therefore in their present state we may plainly read the ancient promise made to *Abraham*, the head and root of the nation, the many wonderful works wrought for them from first to last, and the truth of prophetic predictions; in the present state of the *Jews* we may read the truth of the Gospel, for the rejection of which God rejected them, and scattered them over the face of the earth. In short, we are sure there was such a people as the *Jews*, to whom God delivered the revelation of his will in ancient times; for this very people exist among us at this day, and preserve among them that very revelation, with the most sacred and religious care. And we are sure the numerous predictions of Scripture, both in the Old and New Testament, relating to their future state are true, for we see them made good in the present state of the *Jews*; and therefore we may be as sure that the holy Scriptures are given by inspiration of God; for only the Spirit of God could foretell such events, and the same Spirit which foretold these events, spake in the Prophets and Apostles, and inspired them with all that Divine wisdom and knowledge which we find in all their writings.

I might add the long apostacy, and general corruption of the professors of Christianity, so plainly foretold, and under such express and particular characters, in the Apostolic writings. This, all the world may see, has been abundantly fulfilled in the church of *ROME*. Now, can

the Spirit of God could foresee such a distant and deplorable state of things, which no human probability could have conjectured would have arisen out of the pure and heavenly doctrine of Christ. But the Spirit which predicted this event, is the very same which was poured out upon the Apostles, and enlightened their minds with the knowledge of the Gospel; therefore the Apostles, who wrote the New Testament, had the Spirit of God, and were enlightened by it.

By these arguments I am pointing out to you the only fountain of life and happiness, a mine infinitely more valuable than of gold and precious stones, a plentiful magazine of heavenly and everlasting wealth, an inexhaustible fund of solid comfort and peace, the holy Scriptures, the word of the ever-blessed God; a treasure of immense value, which we have in our possession, if we are wise to make a right improvement of it.

There remains yet another argument to prove the Divine Authority and Original of Scripture, taken from the internal excellency of it. This I shall consider in the following chapter.

C H A P. XLII.

The internal Worth and Excellency of SCRIPTURES considered, as containing the best Principles of Knowledge, Holiness, and Comfort.

THE arguments which I have already advanced, are taken from the external evidence that the Scriptures are the word of God. We now proceed to consider their internal Worth and Excellency, which more fully and directly demonstrates their Divine original, and falls in with the second part of my design, which was to consider the use and importance of the holy Scriptures.

Considering the Scriptures as a gift and blessing from God, the Father of lights and the Fountain of all good, for our improvement in knowledge and holiness, in order to our being advanced to eternal glory and happiness, we may in general conclude, that the Scriptures are in worth and usefulness fully proportionable to the wisdom and goodness of the Donor, and to the noble and beneficent end for which they are intended. They are a glorious display of heavenly light, irradiating the darkness of the world, which otherwise would have been involved in the deepest night of ignorance. Let it be observed, to the honour of the Father, that it is the book which, under the Divine Providence, has preserved in the world the knowledge of the one true God, which otherwise must have been lost and extinguished. For when God in his infinite wisdom was pleased to call *Abraham*, and separate his family to the purposes of revelation, idolatry, even in those early days, not long after

the flood, was so far spread, that even *Abraham's* family were idolaters and served other gods; and so far did the corruption of religion prevail, that all nations, losing the true idea of one God and Father of all, fell into the foulest idolatry, the grossest superstition, and all the abominable vices in connexion with them, except the nation of the *Jews* who enjoyed the word and revelation of God. And it was the word and revelation of God, at the time our Saviour came into the world, which enlightened the *Gentiles*, and so generally reduced them to the worship and obedience of the everlasting *Jehovah*, the Creator of the ends of the earth.

What knowledge of the living God, what detestation of idol-worship, what belief of a future state of rewards and punishment, *MAHOMET* has propagated in the world, he received partly from *Jews*, and partly from *Christians*, who had learnt those things from revelation though, as he could not read himself, with much confusion, and a large mixture of fiction and falsehood. Is any part of the Christian world sunk into superstition and idolatry? It is because they have shut up the Scriptures, forbidden the free use of them, and commanded the people under pain of damnation to follow other guides. Is any part of the Christian world reformed from the gross errors and monstrous corruptions of Popery? It is because they have asserted the authority of the Scriptures, resumed the use of them, and opened them again to free and common perusal. Nay further—Is the Deist, or the man who in a Christian land denies or disparages revelation, acquainted with the first cause, the Fountain of all being, power, life, and happiness, the universal Sovereign? Has he a clear idea of the system of duties which we owe to our Maker, and to one another; or any expectation of a future state of felicity? It is because he has lighted his twinkling candle at this resplendent Sun, which he unnaturally, ungratefully, and weakly endeavours to extinguish. I say *weakly*, because this Sun, which God, ever since the creation of his church and kingdom, has caused to shine in the moral world, shall by his Providence be preserved, and shine with a growing lustre, so long as the sun in the firmament shall endure.

Under God, it must be owned the instrumental cause of all the true religion and piety that is to be found in the world, which, for aught we can see, notwithstanding all the philosophy and wisdom of man, would have been totally lost among all the nations; and it shall be established more and more, it shall shine forth more and more, it shall be honoured more and more, in the truth of its doctrines, in the wisdom of its precepts and instructions, in the accomplishment of its predictions and promises, and in the appearing of our Lord at the last day to receive into his joy all that know God, and obey his Gospel. It shall be established, it shall shine, it shall be honoured, when those who now despise and disparage it, shall be confounded and perish forever.

Thus much may be truly said of the usefulness of Scripture in general; which gives it infinitely the preference to all books of mere human composition, that it has been the means of preserving in the world the grand principles of religion, the knowledge of the being and perfection

of God, and of that true spiritual worship which alone pleases him, and ennobles, purifies, and comforts our souls. And just in proportion as the Bible is received, esteemed, and diligently studied, true religion has prevailed, and will always prevail and flourish. On the other hand, in proportion as the Scriptures are unknown, neglected, abused, and perverted, ignorance, idolatry, irreligion, error, superstition, and wickedness, have and will spread their gloom, and more or less infect nations and particular persons.

The Scriptures contain principles which must be allowed to be of a superior and most excellent kind; the best principles of knowledge, holiness, and comfort.

In the Scriptures we find the best principles of knowledge. There the mind expatiates in a boundless field of heavenly light, and clearly views the prospects of truth, where the eye of mere nature could never have penetrated. There you see the being of God asserted, his nature and perfections, his glorious Majesty and universal Sovereignty, described with the justest propriety of sentiment, and magnificence of language. There you read—"That the everlasting God, the Lord, the Possessor of all being, of all wisdom and power, made the earth and created man upon it; that he stretched out the heavens, and commanded all their hosts. He measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out the heavens with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance. He toucheth the mountains, and they smoke; he looks upon the earth, and it trembleth. Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the earth. Behold, he takes up the isles as a very little thing. All nations are before him as nothing, and they are counted to him as less than nothing and vanity.

"The whole universe rests wholly upon his arm, and is entirely subject to the disposals of his will. Lift up your eyes on high, and behold, who has created these things, that brings out their host by number? He calls them all by name; by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, not one of them fails; in understanding he is infinite; he is mighty in wisdom, wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working. He fills heaven and earth; nor can any hide himself in secret places from his all-penetrating eye. The earth is full of his glory and riches; and his providence is perpetually exercised about all and every one of his creatures. All power belongs to him; he can help and cast down, he can save and destroy; and nothing is too hard for the Lord. God is love; the Lord is good, and doth good; he is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works; he is daily loading us with benefits. The righteous he will bless, to them he will give grace and glory; and even to the wicked the Lord is plenteous and rich in mercy. He is a God of truth, and without iniquity; just and right is he. He is glorious in holiness, and of purer eyes than to behold evil; neither can he look on iniquity. And this God, so great, so glorious, is our God, our Maker, Owner, and Ruler, our Father, Shepherd, and Friend."

This is the doctrine of Scripture; and a sentence or two in this holy

book will give you much clearer conceptions of God than all the volumes of philosophy, wrote by strangers to revelation. There you are taught the various dispensations of the Divine wisdom and goodness, from the beginning of the world to this day, and even to the end of time. There you see the excellent schemes which he has formed for the instruction, reformation, and happiness of the children of men; and we read with pleasure the numerous instances of his favour to the righteous, and with dread the terrors of his vengeance upon the wicked. There we find a twofold covenant; of works, which threatens death to every transgression; of grace, which grants the benefit of repentance and pardon, and promises all needful supplies of strength to the sincere and upright. There we learn how he erected a kingdom among the nations, or a peculiar congregation, to prevent the universal corruption of the world, and, like a beacon upon a hill, to diffuse the light of Divine knowledge in the darkness of the earth. At length we see the Messiah, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, appear, to take away sin, to bring in everlasting righteousness, or salvation, to illustrate the grace of God, and give the plainest explications of his will and our duty; to shew the future world in the clearest and most awful view, and to appoint the most powerful means to attract our hearts to God, and to guide our feet into the ways of peace.

In his Gospel we see the dead, small and great, restored to life, and appearing before his judgment-seat, to receive a sentence according to what they have done in the body. There he has opened the glories of heaven to our sight, and shewn to our faith the far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, the assured consequence of patient continuance in well-doing; he has also uncovered the bottomless pit, the blackness of darkness for ever, which will be the terrible portion of all impenitent workers of iniquity. In the Scriptures the state of the church to the end of the world is described, and we see the present state of things correspondent to prophetic descriptions.

I should exceed my bounds, only to mention the several heads of instruction and knowledge with which the word of God is crowned. I shall mention but one more, and that is, the design of our present being in this world, which is there represented, agreeably to the appearances of things, and the wisdom and goodness of God, to be not for enjoyment, but for trial; not to gain temporal pleasures or possessions, but to discipline our souls, and to prepare them for immortal honour and glory. In particular, the many afflictions incident to our frailty, are set in a true and encouraging light, as the discipline and correction of our heavenly Father; not for our destruction, but for our improvement in holiness, to purify our spirits from sensuality, to draw our regards to things heavenly and eternal, to exercise our faith, hope, patience, and every virtue, which is our real excellency and best qualification for everlasting happiness. This is a brief and very imperfect specimen of Scripture doctrine; which, even in this cursory view, assisted a little with sober reflection, must, to an impartial judgment, moderately acquainted with what the wisest of Pagans have taught, appear infinitely superior to the darkness and uncertainty of mere human knowledge and wisdom.

In the Scriptures you will find the best principles of holiness, or of that state

state of mind whereby we are habitually devoted to God and truth. For there we are shewn the dignity and worth of our being, vastly beyond any thing we could have hammered out of our own reflections. There we read that we are made in the image of God, inspired with understanding, raised vastly in our faculties above the beasts or the fowls, and made for ends proportionably grand and noble; not for the mean purposes of time and sense, but for God, for his honour and favour, to shew forth his praise, and for ever enjoy his goodness. And every obligation resulting from this superiority of nature, and the highest and most excellent purposes of our being, is with the greatest propriety and force urged upon us. In every page of the holy Scriptures the love of God smiles upon us with an attractive and endearing aspect, to draw our affections to him, and to give a constancy and steadiness to our virtue in the midst of so many and so strong temptations, when we know that only such an adherence to truth and righteousness will finally and for ever give us an interest in our heavenly Father's blessing.

In the Scriptures we have the Divine displeasure against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men set upon its true foundation, the odious and pernicious nature of sin; which is in itself false and mischievous, the only proper and radical evil in the universe, and which alone can deprive us of happiness, and subject us to misery. In the word of God, his favour to men of piety and virtue is also set upon its proper foundation, the amiable and excellent nature of true holiness; which in itself is true and salutary, the only proper and radical good, the glory of our nature, and which alone can render us fit to dwell for ever with God.—There we are kindly encouraged by the Divine grace to think of our ways, and by true repentance to turn from whatever is sinful to the obedience of God.—There we are directed frequently to scrutinize our hearts, to banish thence every corrupt principle, and to keep the spring of action within us pure from every disorderly thought and inclination; to guard our spirits with a watchful eye from every impure motion and suggestion, to be vigilant against every attack of temptation, that we may keep ourselves undefiled in the good ways of God.—There we are instructed in the most perfect and reasonable sobriety, temperance, and self-denial, and warned of the danger of every sensual snare and allurement.—There this perishing body, with whatever can delight and adorn it; there this present world, with whatever in it can engage our affections and esteem; are fully exposed to the judgment and censures of reason, and manifestly shewn to be emptiness and vanity, infinitely below the excellence and worth of immortal spirits, and therefore infinitely unfit to be pursued at the expence of our present integrity, or future felicity.

In the sacred writings we find a rich magazine of all proper means for the sanctification of our souls, and our most successful advances in the life of God.—There we see that the Divine Power and Spirit is ready with its mighty aids to assist, enlighten, and strengthen our spirits, in proportion to our sincere desires and endeavours in godliness; and there we are directed every day, and at all times, to seek unto God, by fervent and believing prayer, for his guidance and protection, and are assured we never shall seek his face in vain.—There, in the holy Scriptures,

Scriptures, we are taught the ordinances of religion, both public and private, in the conscientious use of which we shall grow up into Christ Jesus; particularly, we are commanded to set apart a competent portion of our time, every day, and to keep the sabbath holy every week; that by serious meditation upon God's word, and by pouring out our hearts before him in prayer and thanksgiving, we may renew our spiritual strength, be more and more confirmed in the habits of holiness, and find ourselves still advancing nearer to heavenly perfection. This sketch of the principles of holiness, to be derived from the Scriptures, clearly proves their Divine original and excellence, as it sets them vastly above any thing mere human wisdom can discover or devise.

In the Scriptures we also find the best principles of comfort and refreshment to the soul. How needful are such principles in a scene of affliction, sin, and weakness! In general, under how many amiable characters, under how many sweet encouragements, are we invited to trust in the Almighty and Eternal; to look unto him, and make his name, his goodness, and power, our refuge in every want, danger, difficulty, and conflict! being assured that he cares for us, while we hope in him, and that he will never leave us nor forsake us; that, however he may permit our sufferings and griefs, he never can forget us, and will make all things, how bitter soever, work together for our good. Heaven is at all times open to our complaints and supplications, and the throne of God, which is a throne of grace, is easy of access to the breathings and desires of our hearts.

Are we loaded with a sense of guilt? See the blood of Jesus the security and seal of our pardon. Are we humbled under a sense of our own unworthiness? Hear the voice of Divine grace freely conferring a dignity upon us far superior to all the honours of this world. Look into the Scriptures; view the unsearchable riches of *Christ*; behold the love of our God and Redeemer; of his own gracious will, and mere good pleasure, he has begotten us, he is become our Father, he has justified us, he has bestowed upon us the honours of his children, he has made us welcome to all the blessings of his covenant, and to all the glories of his kingdom. Fearful and dejected Soul, look into the Gospel, and see thy God shining in all the beams of free, rich, and heavenly grace. Be of good comfort; thy sins are forgiven, thy interest in the covenant is sure; the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, is thy God and Father, and thou art welcome to all the treasures of his mercy and goodness. Only rejoice in this grace, and live agreeably to it in all faith, purity and holiness, love and goodness.

Are you afraid your own weakness and surrounding temptations should draw your regards from God; pervert your minds, and cause you to fall short of salvation? Fear not, thou worm *Jacob*, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; *I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right-hand of my righteousness*, or salvation. Only cleave unto God, by faith in Christ, with purpose of heart, and he who has begun a good work will certainly perfect it unto the day of Christ. You shall be more than conquerors through him that has loved us. Doth the world frown, and pour its sorrows into your breasts? Look to the heavenly world, the glory that shall be revealed

revealed in the saints. That is your home and country, that is your portion and inheritance; and if you regard it as such, you will rejoice in the hope of the glory of God, and be raised far above the cares and fears of this low and transitory state. Such strong consolations the holy Scriptures supply, and therefore their author is undoubtedly the God of all consolation; for no wisdom of man could ever possibly have opened to us such a fountain of joy and refreshment. And thus we see the Scriptures contain, beyond all dispute, the best principles of knowledge, of holiness, and comfort.

It is no less evident that they deliver the best precepts for directing all our actions. Such precepts are reducible to three heads, our duty to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves. God we are taught to worship with a sincere admiration of his glory and perfections, with profound reverence of his greatness, with humble adoration of his Sovereignty, with the highest love and esteem for his excellency and amiableness, with joy and gratitude for his goodness, and with a heart truly devoted to his honour, and determined for his obedience. To our neighbour we are directed to perform not only justice, truth, and equity, but also unfeigned charity, the most extensive kindness and benevolence. To ourselves we owe self-preservation and self-government; and the Scriptures admonish us to take the wisest care of our being, by cultivating and guarding our minds, and by mortifying all inordinate affections and passions. In short, all that our reason can find in the law or religion of nature, is, without the least omission, transcribed into revelation; and moreover, the wisdom of God has not only perfected and supplied our deficiencies, but has discovered to us the riches of goodness, knowledge, and power, infinitely beyond what our natural faculties could ever have attained.

Thus we are furnished both with the most perfect rules of virtue and godliness, and also with the most powerful motives to the observance of them; and thus the Scriptures are a storehouse of the most sacred and useful knowledge, adapted to the improvement of our minds in whatever is good or excellent, beyond all competition and objection. But as those only can object against them, who never read them, or never with serious minds, if you would know what the Scriptures are, if you would know whether they are of God, read them, study them, meditate upon them, and you cannot fail of being convinced of their excellency and Divine original.

Such being the intrinsic excellency of the Scriptures, it is no wonder it entered into our Lord's thoughts, and was the object of his care in his last moments, even amidst the pains and agonies of death. Its being the subject of his thoughts at a time when his thoughts turned upon nothing but what was infinitely momentous, his being concerned upon the cross, that no point of Scripture should want its full evidence, or establishment, is a demonstration of the high worth and excellency of Scripture. Under all his preceding sufferings, which must be exceeding bitter, he never dropt the least expression of the sorrow and anguish he felt, but endured it with the silence of the most perfect meekness and patience. We must therefore conclude, he would not have opened his mouth to signify his grievous distress, when on the cross, *Why hast thou forsaken*

forsaken me? had it not been for the sake of expressing his trust in God; nor would he have mentioned his thirst, but out of regard to divine revelation, and its accomplishment.

Our Lord has, all along, from first to last, shewn the highest respect to the word of God. With this sword he did combat and conquer Satan, when tempted by him in the wilderness. He always in the course of his ministry appeals to it as the standard of religious truth, revealing the will of God, and explaining his dispensations. He declares he came not to destroy so much as one tittle of the Law or the Prophets, but to complete, vindicate, and illustrate them; assuring us that as their original is Divine, their honours shall be perpetual; and that, *till heaven and earth pass away*, and the whole frame of nature be dissolved, *not one jot shall pass*, or perish, *from the Law*, or from Revelation, *till all be fulfilled*. John v. 39. He directs the *Jews* to search the Scriptures, as they rightly apprehended the doctrine of eternal life was contained in them, and as they testified of him.

As his sufferings drew nearer, he frequently takes notice of the fulfilment of the Scriptures in the several steps and events which led to them. *Matt. xxvi. 31, 54. John xiii. 18. xv. 25.* That the Scriptures might be fulfilled in his sufferings and death, he would not allow his Disciples to rescue him out of the hands of those who came to seize him. *Matt. xxvi. 53, 54.* Had he prayed to the Father, he would have given him more than twelve legions of angels; *but how then, says he, shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?* And when upon the cross, he is not diverted from the same important subject, though in the midst of the most exquisite torments, and labouring under a violent drought. Regard to the Scriptures prevails in his mind, more than the sense of the greatest pain and anguish; and not to relieve his thirst, *but that the Scriptures might be fulfilled*, he cried out, *I thirst.*

Thus our crucified Lord has set the seal of his blood to the Divine authority, excellency, and certainty of the holy Scriptures. He came into the world; he laid down his life to accomplish what was fore-ordained, and foretold in the Scriptures. Now this evidently implies, that our Lord knew, and was persuaded, the Scriptures are of Divine original, are the word, and declare to us the mind and will of God; consequently, that they contain discoveries and instructions of the highest and most excellent nature; and that all things they predict must, and most certainly will, be accomplished.

It seems but an inconsiderable circumstance, that the Scriptures intimate they would give the *Messiah* in his thirst vinegar to drink. This seems to be a fact of no great moment, nor do we know that it stood in connexion with any thing of consequence, and yet our Lord would not overlook it. He took care it should be punctually fulfilled. How much more then may we persuade ourselves, that all the great promises, and all the predictions relating to matters of vast importance, shall be accomplished? The apparent insignificancy of vinegar being offered to *Christ* on the cross, adds great force to this argument. If a point, seemingly so minute, was carefully attended to, and punctually discharged, when the Redeemer was in extremity of pain and torture, how much more, now that he is entered into his joy, now that he is possessed of the

the highest felicity and glory, now that he is invested with the most extensive power and dominion, how much more will he make good all that God has declared by the ancient Prophets in the Old Testament, and all that he himself hath foretold and promised in the New, relating to things of infinite moment! Exceeding great and precious promises are given us of the Divine presence, blessing, and protection, through this world, which every upright mind may be assured will be fully made good.

How many magnificent predictions has our Lord, and his Apostles, delivered concerning the world that is to come—*That he will raise us up again at the last day.* And we shall certainly be raised out of our graves, and restored to a life quite different from the present—*That he will come in great power and glory to judge the world.* And most assuredly he will so come, and we shall every one of us stand before his tribunal to give an account of ourselves—To his faithful servants *he has promised eternal life*: and to all such, without fail, he will give eternal life.—It is frequently foretold, that *everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord* will be the dreadful lot of the impenitently wicked, and doubtless everlasting destruction will be the dreadful lot of such.—Most clearly he has made known his everlasting kingdom of glory, where his sincere followers shall partake of his glory and felicity; and we may firmly believe and hope, this will be our happy condition, if we make it our present care to be his sincere followers. Thus has our benevolent Saviour afforded us, in his last moments, a most solid ground of hope towards God, and directed us absolutely to depend upon all that the Scriptures reveal concerning our salvation.

C H A P. XLIII.

Christians ought to be thankful for the SCRIPTURES, and maintain a high Esteem for them.

HAVING, so far as seems necessary, considered the use and importance of the holy Scriptures, I would now point out the proper improvement of this interesting subject.

We may evidently see our obligation to be thankful for the Scriptures; they are the gift of God, and a great help to our understanding, and rational powers, in the best attainments. And as our natural light and faculties certainly demand our gratitude and thanks, that God has *made us wiser than the fowls of heaven, and taught us more than the beasts of the earth*; and as our joy and praise will be agreeable to our illumination, when in God's heavenly light we shall see glorious and eternal light; so the

the superior instructions and discoveries of revelation do challenge our sincere thanks to our wise and benevolent Father, who has employed his spirit at sundry times, and divers manners, to pour knowledge and light into the darkness of the nations, which otherwise would, in effect, have generally lost the use of intelligence; and that at length he has visited us with the day-spring from on high, a full display of his heavenly grace in the everlasting Gospel.

Should we not maintain a just, that is to say, a very high esteem of the word of God? If it is true, *that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for the noblest ends, for doctrine, for reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness*, then it is true that we cannot set too high a value upon it. The things of this world, which are very imperfect and transitory, have, alas, too large a share of our hearts; but the holy Scriptures are a treasury of heavenly and everlasting riches, and it is but reasonable we should give them the preference to what we know is infinitely inferior in worth. And it is upon this ground that the wisest and best of men have represented them as the highest object of our delight and esteem. *Psalms xix. 7—10. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. More to be desired are they than gold; yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb. Psalm cxix. 96, 97, 103. I have seen an end of all perfection; but thy commandment is exceeding broad. O, how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day. How sweet are thy words unto my taste; yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!* And we may then only call ourselves happy, when we have attained the same sentiments and taste of the good word of God. Indeed I cannot see that we use it as what it is, or answer our Christian profession, if we do not treat it with great esteem and regard. To this purpose let us—

Not allow ourselves to think of it with indifference, or in any respect to treat it irreverently. The worth and infinite importance of the thing will not bear a cool and languid thought; and it is too sacred and divine to admit of any degree of contempt. It is with some reckoned a turn of wit to introduce Scripture phrase into common conversation, and to provoke pleasantries by quoting the Bible. What is this but burlesquing the word of God, and raising a laugh at the expence of the greatest blessing of heaven? Such a profane levity will by degrees lessen the reverence we owe to Scripture, and destroy all serious regard to it; which is, in effect, to destroy ourselves; and therefore should not only be carefully avoided, but with abhorrence detested.

Guard your minds well against Deism on the one hand, and Popery on the other. Both these agree in depreciating the Scriptures. The Deist will persuade you revelation is unnecessary, and consequently that the Scripture is no revelation from God, but a fallacy and cheat, at first invented, and afterwards supported, by those who find their account in it. He racks his invention to start any difficulty or objection, to prove that the Bible is not sufficient to the purposes of revelation. And here, the Romanist joins him. They go indeed different ways; the one, as he pretends, to the mere religion of nature; and the other, in reality, to the authority of the church, and a living infallible guide upon earth. But both

both start from the same point, degrading the holy Scriptures; and I fear very much, they will meet and unite again in a few generations. For where Deistical principles prevail in a family, the rising generation must grow up in great ignorance of revelation, and the true worship of God, and so will be exposed to the artifice of the seducer, who lies in wait to deceive. For however men may refine in their speculations, and put a force upon the most common and obvious principles in their minds, yet certainly such is the general sense of mankind, when left free and unbiassed, with regard to religion, that they easily admit the belief of some superior invisible powers, and their intercourse with this world; and being ignorant of the truth, are with little difficulty drawn into error.

This makes me apprehend that the present spread of Deism will, in a few ages, produce a large increase of Popery among us. Not to say, that Popish seminaries, where they cannot directly promote the cause of the church of ROME, are allowed and instructed to do it in this indirect way. For confusion and ignorance of any kind is a proper ground for them to work upon. But this by the bye. My design is to guard you against those who would raise scruples and prejudices in your minds against revelation. And without descending to particulars, you may be very sure of this one thing, that whoever cavil against the Scriptures are strangers to them. They object and take upon themselves to judge in a matter in which they are no ways qualified to be judges; in a matter which they neither understand, nor, in their present way of thinking, ever intend to understand. For, whatever airs such may give themselves, or what semblance or show soever they make of knowledge and wisdom, these men have never studied the Scriptures; nor, generally speaking, have they learning or capacity to enter into their deep and abstruse parts. Had they ever soberly and seriously studied the Scriptures, they must of necessity have found so many, and such evident marks of a Divine Spirit, such glorious displays of the wisdom, power, and truth of God, as would have taught them to think more modestly of what is doubtful and obscure.

When did you ever hear of any name, illustrious for learning and wisdom, that ever disputed the Divine original and authority of Scripture? Did ever a BOYLE, a NEWTON, or a LOCKE, question the Divine original or truth of Scripture? * No. These men, of the most eminent attainments

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attainments in wisdom and knowledge, held the Scriptures in the highest veneration and esteem, as a revelation from God; and by their excellent comments have acknowledged the Divine authority even of the most abstruse and difficult parts. No. The cavillers against Scripture are men of an inferior class, who want, and are no ways solicitous to gain, the qualifications needful to render them in any degree fit or competent judges. It is enough for such to pick up a small collection of scruples, to ease themselves of the trouble of thought or study, and at the same time to give a plausible appearance of both. But with men of judgment, such must stand in a very ridiculous light. To a judicious physician, how silly and contemptible must a person be, who, though no ways skilled in the science, should take upon him perpetually to censure, vilify, and condemn a BOERHAVE, or a SYDENHAM, the greatest masters in the art of medicine!

Perhaps you may say—Are there not real difficulties in the Scriptures? And will not difficulties naturally and unavoidably produce objections? I answer—There are difficulties in the Scriptures; and difficulties are the

“TEACHING us, that denying ungodliness, and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.”

“LOOKING for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearance of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.”

“Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.”

SIR CHRISTOPHER HATTON, a great statesman, a little before his death, advised his relations to be serious in searching after the will of God in his holy word; for, said he—

“It is deservedly accounted a piece of excellent knowledge to understand the laws of the land, and the customs of a man’s country; how much more, to know the statutes of heaven, and the laws of eternity, those immutable and eternal laws of justice and righteousness! to know the will and pleasure of the great Monarch and universal King! *I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad.* Whatever other knowledge a man may be endowed withal, could he by a vast and imperious mind, and a heart as large as the sand upon the sea-shore, command all the knowledge of art and nature, of words and things; and yet not know the Author of his being, and the Preserver of his life, his Sovereign and his Judge, his surest Refuge in trouble, his best Friend or worst Enemy, the Support of his life and the Hope of his death, his future Happiness and his Portion for ever; he doth but go down to hell with a great deal of wisdom.”

MR. LOCKE, also justly esteemed one of the greatest masters of reason, and a philosopher of the greatest freedom of thought, at the close of his life, thus advised an intimate friend.

“Study the holy Scriptures, especially the New Testament; therein are contained the words of eternal life. It hath God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error for its matter.” *Posthumous Works*, p. 344.

And to the same effect, a wiser still in the same situation, SOLOMON. *To fear God, and keep his commandments, (in order to which, it is necessary that we read and study them) is the whole of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.* Eccles. xii. 13, 14.

the natural ground of objections, but not of destroying any truth, otherwise well established. For all science whatever is attended with difficulties, and objections may be raised against the clearest and most demonstrable truths. The being of God, and his perfections, the creation of the world, the constitution of nature, the ways of Providence, and any the best and most useful knowledge we can gain, is attended with difficulties, and consequently liable to objections. Let it be well observed, those difficulties arise not from the things themselves, but from the imperfection of our minds. In the things themselves there are no difficulties, nor any ground for objection; the difficulties are in the narrowness of our understandings, which find a great difficulty in comprehending many things relating even to the most certain and undoubted truths. And, with regard to the Scriptures, I myself have had large experience of this. Many things which at first, and for some time, appeared to me very obscure, unaccountable, and inconsistent, by patient application, and a closer attention, have shone out unclouded into the plainest and clearest truths. By this I am convinced, that all remaining difficulties are not so in themselves, but only so with respect to the imperfection of my mind. And upon the whole, you may be very sure, when you hear any objection advanced against the Scriptures, that the objection, in truth and reality, lies against the objector himself, as he either cannot, or will not, see the truth as it stands in the word of God.

But you may say—Why should God put into his word things to us difficult and obscure? I answer—To exercise our diligence, and to try our integrity. I have said so much to convince you of the vanity and folly of Deism, and to guard you against any bad impressions from that quarter, which may prove of very fatal consequence. A little of this leaven may do a great deal of harm, as it creates an indifference to Divine knowledge, to the instructions and counsels of our heavenly Father; as it takes us off from the study of the Scriptures, robs us of the best guide of our actions, the most powerful motives to all virtue, the strongest consolations in every day of affliction; and at last exposes to the righteous judgment of God, for the neglect and contempt of the best of blessings he ever bestowed upon the world.

We have the strongest reason to be fully satisfied of the sufficiency of Scripture, as perfectly able to make us wise unto salvation. The Papist will own the Scriptures to be the word of God, and a true rule of faith, but not a sufficient rule. The only sufficient rule of faith he will tell you, is the church of Rome, which infallibly understands and propounds what the Christian world is to believe and do, in order to eternal salvation; and therefore you ought implicitly to submit your understanding and conscience to her direction and decisions; and doing so, you have no need to consult the Scriptures, being already provided with a living infallible guide. But if the Scriptures are a true rule of faith, then are they a sufficient rule to all sorts and degrees of persons, for they expressly affirm their own sufficiency in this extensive sense.

That nothing but Scripture is a sufficient ground to build our faith and practice upon, as Christians, will clearly appear to any considerate person. All besides is uncertainty and confusion. You have Popes against Popes, councils against councils, fathers against fathers, the church of

one age against the church of another age ; and tradition passing through hands so uncertain and inconsistent, must of necessity lose all force of evidence. Only upon the rock of Scripture can we find any rest for the sole of our feet ; and there we have a firm foundation, and a sure infallible guide, which we may with the greatest certainty and steadfastness oppose to the authority of the church of ROME.

Whatever may be pretended to gain that church the credit of a guide, all that, and much more, may be said for the Scriptures. Has the church of ROME been ancient ? The Scriptures are more ancient. Is that church a means to keep Christians in unity ? So is the Scriptures to preserve unity of belief in things necessary and plainly revealed, and in unity of charity in other matters. Following the Scriptures, we shall follow that which must be true, if the church of ROME be true, for she owns the truth of Scripture. Whereas, if we follow that church, we follow that which, if the Scriptures be true, may be false ; nay, which, if the Scriptures be true, must be false, because the Scriptures testify against it. We have God's express command to follow the Scriptures, and no intimation or colour of any prohibition ; but to believe in the church of ROME we have no command at all, much less an express command ; nay, on the contrary, we have a general prohibition in these words, *Call no man master upon earth.*

Following the Scriptures, we shall embrace a religion which, being contrary to flesh and blood, without any assistance from worldly power, wisdom, or policy, nay, against all the power and policy of the world, prevailed and spread itself in a short time over a very great part of the world. Whereas it is apparent the church of ROME has got, and still maintains her authority over men's consciences, by counterfeiting false miracles, forging false histories, corrupting the monuments of former times, by wars, by persecutions, by massacres, by treasons, by rebellions ; in short, by all manner of carnal unjustifiable means, whether violent or fraudulent.

Following the Scriptures, we shall believe a religion the first preachers and professors whereof could certainly have no worldly ends ; could neither project nor promise to themselves by it any of the profits, honours, or pleasures of this world, but rather the contrary, even all the hardships the world could lay upon them. On the other hand, the head of the church of ROME, the pretended vicar of Christ, successor of the Apostles, and guide of faith, it is palpably evident, makes the Popish religion the instrument of his ambition, to gratify the lust of dominion, by subjecting the consciences of all mankind to his authority, and all nations to his jurisdiction. Besides, it is evident to any man who has but half an eye, that most of those doctrines which the Romish church addeth to the Scriptures, are, one way or other, calculated to promote the honour or temporal profit of the teachers of them.

Following the Scriptures only, we shall embrace a religion of perfect simplicity and purity ; consisting, in a manner, wholly in the worship of God in spirit and truth, and in sincere obedience to his will. Whereas the Roman church, and doctrine, is loaded with an infinity of weak, childish, ridiculous superstitions and ceremonies, and the most gross and manifest idolatry. If we follow the Scriptures, we must not promise ourselves

selves salvation without forsaking effectually, and mortifying all vices, and practising sincerely all Christian virtues, which our reason tells us is the only way in which we can secure the favour of God, and our own happiness. But the church of ROME opens an easier and broader way to heaven, and, though a man continues all his life long in a course of sin, gives him assurances he may be let into heaven by a back gate, even by an act of attrition, at the hour of death, if it be joined with confession to a priest, or by an act of contrition without it.

Just and perfect are the precepts of piety and humility, of innocence and patience, of goodness, temperance, sobriety, justice, meekness, fortitude, and constancy, contempt of the world, the love of God, and of mankind; in a word, of all virtues, and against all vices, which the Scriptures oblige us to observe and obey, as ever we hope to see God in his heavenly kingdom; which, if they were generally obeyed, could not but make the world generally happy; and the goodness of them alone is sufficient to make any wise and good man believe that the religion which obliges to them, comes from God, the fountain of all goodness. The church of ROME enervates, and in a manner dissolves and abrogates, many of the holy precepts of the Gospel, by teaching men that they are not laws for all Christians, but counsels of perfection, and matters of supererogation, which a man should do well if he observes, but shall not sin if he doth not observe them; that they are for those who aim at high places in heaven; but if a man will be content with an inferior situation there, especially if he be content to taste of purgatory in the way, he need not incurber his thoughts at present with many of the rules of the Gospel. Not to say, that the *Romish* church manifestly fosters a spirit of uncharitableness and cruelty to all mankind, not of her profession. Therefore the religion of this church is far from being so holy or so good as the doctrine of Christ delivered in the Scriptures, and consequently cannot come from the same fountain of holiness and goodness.

Following the church of ROME for our guide, we shall only follow a combination of deluded men, who have fast closed their eyes, and are not at liberty to open them, or to examine and consider whether they are in the right or no. For that Papists have no liberty of judgement is manifest, because they reckon it a mortal sin to *doubt of any part of their doctrine*. Whence it follows, that seeing every man must resolve that he will never commit mortal sin, he must never examine the grounds of Popery at all, for fear he should be moved to doubt; or if he do examine, he must before resolve that no evidence, not even of Scripture, no motives, be they ever so strong, shall move him to doubt, lest he should fall into mortal sin.

Seeing this is the condition of all who are esteemed good Catholics, who can deny that they are a set of men unwilling and afraid to understand, that have eyes to see and will not, that have not the love of the truth, but are given over to strong delusion? And therefore, in following such a church, and such guides, we shall only follow the blind, and with them fall into the ditch. If we follow the Scriptures, we shall follow only the truth; we shall follow a guide which exhorts us to keep our eyes always open to the truth, to try all things, and to hold fast only

that which is good ; to try every spirit, and to bring every doctrine to the test of God's pure and holy word. And thus we are at liberty to review the ground upon which we stand, to correct any error, and to improve our minds in the knowledge and love of the truth.

In these and several other respects, the sufficiency of Scripture to guide us in the way of life and salvation, is evidently seen, and how foolish and unsafe it is to forsake this heavenly guide, and follow the delusions of the church of ROME. But then, the greater the evidence that Scripture is a perfect guide to eternal life, the greater must our obligations be to use it faithfully as such.

Let us be much in reading the Scriptures, and think and judge freely. By judging freely, I do not mean rashly and at random ; we must judge of the Scriptures with all possible care and caution ; but judge freely, without regard to the authority of any person, party, or church whatsoever. We are made by our gracious Creator for the knowledge of the truth ; not to be the dupes of custom or authority, not blindly to follow the dictates, decrees, and constitutions of weak and ambitious men ; but to employ our minds generously in the search and knowledge of the truth. Christianity calls us to the noblest exercise of our understanding ; and we lose the benefit of it, if we do not think seriously, and judge freely.

There is no other way of having our minds established, and well seasoned with the principles of our religion. In this way we shall see the glory and excellency of the holy Scriptures ; thus we shall feel the power of God's word upon our hearts ; thus our understandings will gradually be enlightened with Divine knowledge, and, to our unspeakable comfort, grow up into Jesus Christ, and gain the happiness of the man who, forsaking all impiety, and every false way, delights himself in the law of the Lord, and daily meditates therein. Such a one is under the special blessing of heaven, and, like a tree planted in a fruitful soil, shall grow and flourish, and rise infinitely higher than all the honours, wealth, and enjoyments of this world ; he shall rise to immortality, and there find all the glorious fruits of a life of piety, and the full accomplishment of the magnificent promises which here on earth he with pleasure perused in the word of God.

This is what I have to offer on this important subject. Whatever the result may be, with regard to others, this one point is sufficiently secured—I have satisfied my conscience by discharging what I esteem an incumbent duty : and I have done it in the faithfulness and integrity of my heart, according to the wisdom God has given me.

A P P E N D I X.

Chronological Dates for Chapters xxxiv. xxxv. and xxxvi.

C H A P. XXXIV.

PROPHETS before the CAPTIVITY.

Years
before
Christ.

| | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 812 | AMAZIAH king of Judah Jeroboam II. king of Israel | Jonah sent with a message. 2 Kings xiii. 20. xiv. 25. |
| 800 | Uzziah king of Judah Jeroboam II. | Joel i. ii. iii. |
| 800 | Jeroboam II. king of Israel Uzziah king of Judah | Amos i—ix. |
| 800 | Jeroboam II. Uzziah | Hosea i. ii. iii. |
| 772 | Menahem I. | Hosea iv. |
| 770 | Menahem II. | Jonah i. ii. iii. iv. |
| 759 | Uzziah 52. Pekah 1. | Isaiah vi. ii. iii. iv. v. |
| 753 | Jotham 5. Pekah 7. | Micah i. ii. |
| 742 | Ahaz 1. Pekah 18. | Isaiah vii. |
| | In the same year | Isaiah viii. ix. x. |
| | In the same year | Isaiah xvii. |
| 740 | Ahaz 3. Pekah 20. | Isaiah i. |
| | In the same year | Isaiah xxviii. |
| 739 | Aphaz 4. | Hosea v. vi. |
| 726 | Hezekiah 2. | Isaiah xiv. ver. 28, &c. |
| | In the same year | Isaiah xv. xvi. |
| 725 | Hezekiah 3. Hoshea 6. | { Hosea vii—xiv. |
| | | { Micah iii. iv. v. vi. vii. |
| 720 | Hezekiah 7. | Nahum i. ii. iii. |
| 715 | Hezekiah 13. | Isaiah xxiii—xxvii. |
| 714 | Hezekiah 14. | Isaiah xxxviii. xxxix. |
| 714 | Hezekiah 14. | Isaiah xxix. xxx—xxxv. |
| | In the same year | Isaiah xxii. ver. 1—15. |
| | In the same year | Isaiah xxi. |
| 713 | Hezekiah 15. | Isaiah xx. |
| | In the same year | Isaiah xviii. xix. |
| 710 | Hezekiah 18. | Isaiah x. ver. 5, &c. xi. xii. xiii. |
| | | xiv. ver. 28, &c. |

Years
before
Christ.

- In the same year
In the same year
698 Manasseh 1.
628 Josiah 13.
623 Josiah 18.

611 Josiah 31.

610 Jehoiakim 1.
In the same year
606 Jehoiakim 4.
In the same year
In the same year
In the same year
In the same year
In the same year
605 Jehoiakim 5.
603 Jehoiakim 7.
599 Zedekiah 1.
In the same year
In the same year
In the same year
In the same year
598 Zedekiah 2.
In the same year
In the same year
596 Zedekiah 4.
In the same year
595 Zedekiah 5. Jehoiachin's capt. 5.
594 Zedekiah 6. Jehoiachin's capt. 6.
593 Zedekiah 7. Jehoiachin's capt. 7.
In the same year, fifth month
591 Zedekiah 9. Jehoiachin's capt. 9.
In the same year
In the same year
In the same year
590 Zedekiah 10. Jehoiachin's capt. 10.
In the same year
In the same year
In the same year
In the same year
In the same year
In the same year
In the same year
In the same year
In the same year
Isaiah xxxvi. xxxvii.
Isaiah xl—xliii, &c.
Isaiah xxii. ver. 15.
Jeremiah i. ii.
Jeremiah xi. ver. 11—18.
Jeremiah iii—x. xii—xxi.
Jeremiah xi. ver. 18, &c.
Habakkuk i. ii. iii. Zephaniah i. ii. iii.
Jeremiah xxii. ver. 1—24.
Jeremiah xxvi.
Jeremiah xxv.
Jeremiah xxxv.
Jeremiah xlvi.
Jeremiah xxxvi. ver. 1—9.
Jeremiah xlv.
Daniel i.
Jeremiah xxxvi. ver. 9, &c.
Daniel ii.
Jeremiah xxii. ver. 24, &c.
Jeremiah xxiii.
Jeremiah xiii. ver. 13, &c.
Jeremiah xxiv.
Jeremiah xlix. ver. 34, &c.
Jeremiah xxix.
Jeremiah xxx. xxxi.
Jeremiah xxvii.
Jeremiah xxviii.
Jeremiah l. li.
Ezekiel i—vii.
Ezekiel viii—xi.
Ezekiel xii—xix.
Ezekiel xx—xxiii.
Jeremiah xxi. xxxiv. ver. 1—8.
Jeremiah xlvii.
Jeremiah xlviii. xlix. ver. 1—34.
Ezekiel xxiv. xxv.
Jeremiah xxxvii. ver. 1—11.

Jeremiah xxxiv. ver. 8, &c.
Jeremiah xxxvii. ver. 11—16.
Jeremiah xxxii. xxiii.
Ezekiel xxix. ver. 1—17. xxx.
Jeremiah xxxvii. ver. 17, &c.
Jeremiah xxxviii. ver. 1—14.
Jeremiah xxxix. ver. 15, &c.
Jeremiah xxxviii. ver. 14, &c.
519 Zedekiah

Years
before
Christ.

589 Zedekiah 11. Jehoiachin's
capt. 11. first month
In the same year, third month
In the same year, fourth month

In the same year, fifth or sixth
month
In the same year

Ezekiel xxxvi. xxxvii. xxxviii.
Ezekiel xxxi.
Jeremiah xxxix. ver. 1—11. lii.
ver. 1—30.
Jeremiah xxxix. ver. 11—15. xl.
ver. 1—7.
Jeremiah xl. ver. 7. xli. xlii. xliii.
xliv. ver. 1—8.

C H A P. XXXV.

PROPHETS *after the Destruction of the TEMPLE, during the CAPTIVITY.*

Years
before
Christ.

588 **J**EHOIACHIN's captivity
12. tenth month
In the same year, twelfth month
Between the 12 and 25 capti-
vity
In the same year
In the same year
In this year Nebuchadnezzar
set up his golden image
754 Jehoiachin's captivity 25.
569 Jehoiachin's captivity 30.
In the same year
562 Jehoiachin's captivity 37.
555 Belshazzar 1.
553 Belshazzar 3.
539 Belshazzar 17.
538 Darius the Mede 1.
In the same year
536 Cyrus 1.
535 Cyrus 2.

Ezekiel xxxiii.
Ezekiel xxxii.
Ezekiel xxxiv. xxxvi. xxxvii.
xxxviii. xxxix.
Obadiah
Ezekiel xxxv.

Daniel iii.
Ezekiel xl. xli. &c.
Ezekiel xxxi. ver. 17, &c.
Daniel iv.
Jeremiah lii. ver. 31, &c.
Daniel vii.
Daniel viii.
Daniel v.
Daniel vi.
Daniel ix.
Ezra i. ii.
Ezra iii.

C H A P. XXXVI,

PROPHETS after the CAPTIVITY, under the second TEMPLE,

Years
before
Christ.

- 535 **C**YRUS 2.
In the third year of Cy-
rus, and third after the cap-
tivity
- 520 Darius Hystaspes 2. sixth month
In the same year and month
In the same year, seventh month
In the same year, eighth month
In the same year, ninth month
In the same year, eleventh month
- 516 Darius 3.
- 518 Darius 4.
In the same year, ninth month
Subsequent to the fourth year
of Darius Hystaspes
- 515 Darius 6.
- 462 Ahasuerus 3.
- 461 Ahasuerus 4.
- 458 Ahasuerus 7.
In the same year
- 457 Ahasuerus 8.
- 453 Ahasuerus 12.
- 445 Ahasuerus 20.
- 433 Ahasuerus 32.
- 429 Ahasuerus 36.
- 428 Ahasuerus 37.
- 396 Ptolemy Soter 9.

Ezra iv.

Daniel x. xi. xii.
Haggai i. ver. 1—12.
Haggai i. ver. 12, &c. Ezra v.
Haggai ii. ver. 1—10.
Zechariah i. ver. 1—7.
Haggai ii. ver. 10, &c.
Zechariah i. ver. 7, &c. ii—vi.
Ezra v. ver. 3, &c.
Ezra vi. ver. 1—15.
Zechariah vii. viii.

Zechariah ix—xiv.
Ezra vi. ver. 15, &c.
Esther i.
Esther ii. ver. 1—16.
Ezra vii—x.
Esther ii. ver. 16—21.
Esther ii. ver. 21, &c.
Esther iii. iv. v, &c.
Nehemiah i—iii, &c.
Nehemiah xiii. ver. 6.
Malachi i—iv.
Nehemiah xiii. ver. 6, &c.
The Canon of the Old Testament
completed, by adding two books
of Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah,
Esther, and Malachi; by SIMON
the Just.

T H E P R E F A C E.

ONE may divide men into two general classes. Some are without any knowledge of a Deity, or sense of Religion: travellers tell us, that in the *West-Indies*, the eastern parts of *Tartary*, and some places of *Africa*, such people are to be found. I know this is a fact which is disputed by others; and *Fabricius*, a divine of the Palatinate, pretends that he has solidly confuted it. If this fact should be thought doubtful, yet it is known at least, that some persons may be found here and there in the world, who look upon the existence of a Deity as upon a fable, and who ridicule all acts of religious worship whatsoever: but one may also say, that if he compare these with the rest of the world, they make the least and worst part of mankind, though many of them affect to live morally well.

All the rest of the world make profession that they own a God; that is to say, a most perfect, eternal, and independent Being; that he governs all things by his providence; that there is a difference between good and evil; that man doth well or ill in those actions which depend on his liberty: from whence they equally conclude, that man was designed for the duties of the religion, that society without it would be pure robbery; and that, as it is hard to conceive that men should be wholly destroyed by death, so it is directly contrary to the sentiments of conscience to deny all rewards for virtue, or punishments for vice, after this life.

All the diversities of religion amongst men are reducible to two kinds.

The first is, of those who suppose that there is more than one God; and this is the belief of all *Pagans* in general.

The second is, of those that acknowledge one only God; such are the *Jews*, *Christians*, and *Mahometans*.

Now, as for the cure of different diseases several remedies are made use of, so it is visible, that, to deliver men of their various prejudices, we must take very different methods.

The

The ignorance of those barbarous people in the *Indies*, *Tartary*, and *Africa*, must be removed, by teaching them the first principles, and making them apply the little sense they have left them of good and evil, right and wrong, to the fundamental maxims of religion.

Atheists must be convinced by reflexions upon those principles which they admit, by shewing that the truths which they reject are the natural consequences of those principles which they dare not dispute.

To convince the Heathen, who suppose many gods, we must examine their principles, and confute them; which is the easiest thing in the world; the wisest men having formerly acknowledged, as they also own to this very day, that there is but one God.

And indeed it seems, that the greatest part of philosophers did own a plurality of gods, only in compliance with the opinions of the people, which it was dangerous to contradict.

And as for the *Jews*, so far as they agree with the *Christians* and *Mahometans* about the unity of God, we are only to prove to them the truth of that which is the very essence of the *Christian Religion*, in opposition to their prejudices: one may prove this against the *Jews* without any trouble, because they are agreed in most of those principles which the *Christian Religion* supposes. So likewise it is easily established against the *Mahometans*, who grant the truth of *Christian Religion* in general, but pretend that it ought to give place to *Mahometanism*, as the Law ought to give place to the Gospel, preached by Jesus Christ.

My design is not to prosecute every one of these ways in particular. There are books enough in the world which solidly prove the necessity of Religion against all sorts of Atheists, as well those who are so through ignorance, as those who profess themselves such from love to libertinism, and to pass for men of a mighty reach.

There are also several famous authors who have made it evident, that reason alone is sufficient to overthrow all *Pagan* religions whatsoever.

I am resolved to follow a more compendious and sure method, that is, to demonstrate the truth of the *Christian Religion*, considered by itself.

In short, it is impossible (considering the opposition there is between the *Christian Religion* and all the other religions in the world) but that, if the *Christian Religion* should be the true, all others must be false in those articles wherein they essentially differ from it.

And on the other hand, one cannot explain those arguments which clearly evince the truth of Christianity, without convicting all other religions of falsehood, because they are destitute of those proofs which are peculiar to the *Christian Religion*.

I know very well that there are several ways which lead to the end which I propose. Men that think much, wish that a perfect conformity of the *Christian Religion* with the conscience of man might be demonstrated, from reflexions on the heart of man, and the dictates of it, which to them would be a convincing and demonstrative proof.

Others apply themselves to a speculative examination of the doctrines and proofs of the *Christian Religion*, to shew their conformity with the notions of reason. I will not deny but that both these employ themselves usually in this sort of study, and that truth finds a considerable support from their meditations.

But how useful soever they may be, I have rather chosen to follow another course, as thinking it of more advantage, solidly to establish the facts which the *Christian Religion* proposeth; which appears to me to be more proper to persuade all sorts of readers, and better levelled to the ordinary capacity of those who newly enter upon the examination of this truth.

And as the necessity of revelation is generally owned by heathens, and by all other nations of the world, I thought it a thing altogether unnecessary to enter upon the examination of several abstracted questions, such as these: whether there be any natural knowledge of God, whether men are naturally inclined to be religious, and the like. When I shall have firmly proved, that God revealed himself, that he prescribed a service to the first men, who left the rules of it to all their posterity, from whence all the religion that ever was, or is yet in the heathen world, was derived, I shall have prevented many very unprofitable disputes, and which can only perplex the mind by their obscurity.

I have therefore confined myself to certain considerations, which do so establish the truth of the books of the Old and New Testament, as by their union they firmly prove the truth of the *Christian Religion*.

I hope that it will not be thought needful for me to demonstrate, that the *Mahometan* religion ought not to abolish the Christian, as the Christians pretend that the *Christian Religion* abrogated the ceremonial part of the *Jewish* worship.

As soon as an understanding Reader shall make some reflexions upon the nature of the arguments which demonstrate the truth of the *Christian Religion*, he may easily perceive that God never framed the model of that religion which the *Mahometans* would obtrude upon us.



REFLEXIONS

UPON THE

BOOKS OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURE,

For the Establishing of the Truth

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

Concerning the FUNDAMENTALS of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

WE are to consider three things in the Christian Religion; the Matters of Fact it propounds to us for true, the Promises it affords us, and the Worship it commands.

The Matters of Fact it propounds to us as true, are—that God created the world; that he formed the first man, from whom the rest of mankind have been propagated; that a while after this man was created, he violated the law God had given him; and that whereas he deserved to have perished for this his disobedience, God was pleased, instead thereof, to comfort him with the hopes of a Saviour which was to be born of the seed of his wife; that God hath actually sent this Saviour into the world, which comprehends the whole economy of Christ, viz. his birth, life, preaching, miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, &c.

The

The Promises it vouchsafes, are the forgiveness of our sins, the resurrection of our bodies, and a state absolutely happy for ever in heaven.

And lastly, the Worship of divine service it prescribes consists in obedience to the law of God, in prayer for the pardon of our sins, and his protection, and in a grateful acknowledgment of what we owe him for all his benefits towards us.

The first of these three parts of the Christian Religion, viz. the truth of the Matters of Fact it relates, may be said to be the foundation of the other two, viz. the Promises and commands.

It is impossible to be persuaded, that God hath created this world in which we live, and made mankind of one and the same blood; that after the fall he promised to save men, and did actually redeem them in sending Jesus Christ, who suffered death, and being raised the third day ascended into heaven, &c. I say, it is impossible to look upon these facts as true without being assured that God will accomplish the promises he hath made to us.

And it is as evident that we cannot be convinced of the truth of these matters, without being sensible of a strong obligation laid upon us to perform all the duties of the Christian religion.

As soon as a man reflects upon his being God's creature, he finds himself naturally obliged to obey God universally, according to his utmost ability: but when he comes further to believe, that God did not destroy the first man for his disobedience, but was graciously pleased to promise him a Saviour for himself and all his posterity; and when moreover he is assured, that God hath really sent this Saviour in the way and manner the Gospel relates to us; we cannot conceive but that he must find himself under the highest engagements imaginable of rendering to God a religious obedience, and believing his promises.

But there is yet another obligation whereby man is bound to obey God, to pray to him, and to offer him all manner of religious worship: God, by redeeming him, hath obtained a new claim to, and right over him, and a more indispensable obligation is laid upon man to submit himself to God, in all religious concerns, as being not only created but also redeemed by him.

Reason acknowledgeth, that if the truth of these things be once admitted, nothing can be more just and natural than those consequences which the Christians thence infer.

All the difficulty therefore that occurs in this matter, consists in the proof of those facts which the Christian religion propounds to us; that is, to say, in proving the creation of the world, the fall of man, the promise of a redeemer, his coming into the world, his miracles, death, resurrection, ascension into heaven, &c. which are the foundations of the Christian Religion. And indeed these are the very matters of which Atheists and Libertines require a solid proof.

And it doth the more concern us to satisfy their demands, forasmuch as the Jews, who are scattered throughout the whole world, do oppose our assertion, that the promise of sending the Messiah is already accomplished, though they agree upon the matter with us in all other articles. Moreover, the performing this task may very much contribute to the conversion

version of a great number of bad Christians, whose fall and continuance in vices and licentiousness is to be ascribed to their being so weakly persuaded of the truth of these Fundamentals, and that because they have never considered of them with sufficient attention.

C H A P. II.

That the CHRISTIAN RELIGION is founded upon Proofs of Matter of Fact.

FORASMUCH as, in order to establish the truth of the Christian Religion, we confine ourselves at present to those Proofs which make out the Matters of Fact it proposes; omitting all other arguments which may evidence the truth of it, though possibly no less convincing; it is obvious, that the proofs we are to produce in confirmation of them, must be such as are proper to evince the truth of things long since past and done.

If we were treating of the events of the time we live in, it might be justly required that we should produce eye-witnesses of them: but forasmuch as the question here is concerning matters long since past, it is natural for us to have recourse to history, which furnisheth us with the relations of those who were eye-witnesses of the same; this being the only way left us to confirm our belief of things at so great a distance from us.

I am beholden to history only for the knowledge I have of a *Cyrus*, an *Alexander*, or a *Cæsar*; and yet having read the account they give me of them, I find them matters I can no way rationally doubt of.

I acknowledge that the certainty we have of things long since past, is much inferior to that which we have of matters confirmed to us by eye-witnesses. Nevertheless, because it is evident that the events of ancient times cannot be confirmed but by proofs of this nature, it has never entered into the minds of any to account the existence of such men as *Cyrus* and *Alexander* for fables, upon the pretence that none now alive did ever see them, or because there are scarce any traces left of those empires of which they were the founders.

Indeed the certainty we have of these things is such, as nothing can be superadded to it; for though it be founded on the authority of historians who lived many ages ago, yet withal we are to consider that the matters related do not only carry the idea of probability and truth along with them, but that they are the very ground and foundation of all the histories of following ages; which cannot be questioned, if we consider the connexion and dependence of the things related, according to the light of sense, and the equity of reason.

A Matter

A Matter of Fact then is accounted certain, when it is attested by those who were eye-witnesses of it, when recorded by an historian who lived amongst those who had perfect knowledge of it; when the matter is not gainsaid or contradicted by any; if we find it penned at a time when the things could not be related by any otherwise than indeed they were, without exposing themselves to public derision; and last of all, when the matter is found to be of that nature, as none could be ignorant of it, either because it was the interest of every one to be informed of it, or because the thing was so public that it could not be hid from any; or lastly, because of its natural connexion with all those other events which necessarily depend on it.

To speak plain, it is very unjust to demand either more proofs, or such as are of another nature, for the confirmation of the truth of our religion, than are required to verify any other matters of fact. Why should not the testimony of *Noah's* children be sufficient to conclude there was such a man as *Methusalem*, in case they assure us that they have seen him? Or why should not the testimony of *Methusalem* be of credit enough to prove there was such a man as *Adam*, if he avers that he saw him, and conversed with him? Do we not every day give credit to the account which old men give us of their predecessors, especially when we find that what they relate hath an exact reference and connexion with those things we are eye-witnesses of?

But it is an easy thing to make it appear, that the proofs which evidence the truth of the matters which our religion proposeth, are infinitely more strong and convincing.

All the circumstances we can imagine proper to evince the truth of any relation, do concur to place the matters recorded in holy Scriptures beyond the reach of doubt or uncertainty.

We account the single testimony of an historian a sufficient proof that there was once a very famous temple at *Delphos* or *Ephesus*, notwithstanding that all the monuments remaining at this day to confirm his relation be very doubtful and defective. Whereas I shall make it appear that an entire nation, yea, many nations, do attest the truth of those matters which the Christian Religion proposes; and that all the actions, discourses, and whole series of events thereto relating, do furnish us with an infinite number of characters which invincibly signalize the truth of the holy Scriptures.

C H A P. III.

Some General Remarks, in order to establish the Truth of Holy SCRIPTURE.

FORASMUCH as I have undertaken to prove the truth of the Matters of Fact contained in our Religion from the testimony of the penmen of the Old and New Testament, it will be proper, in order to the executing of my design, to begin with a general proof of the truth of the said books; which will not be difficult, if one makes the following remarks.

The first is, That it appears from the five books of *Moses*, that he wrote the history of the creation of the world, and of the promise of the Messiah; of the deluge, the rise and pedigree of the several nations of the world, of the division of tongues; and in particular, the history of the family of *Abraham* until the entering of the children of *Israel* into *Palestina*, 2552 years after the creation of the world.

The second is, That the following books, viz. of *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Ruth*, the four books of *Kings*, of *Chronicles*, with the books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, are a continuation of the said history, from the entering of the *Jews* into *Palestina*, until their re-establishment in the said country, about the year of the world 3600. Here we read the conquest of *Palestina* under the conduct of *Joshua*, how it was divided amongst the tribes after they had destroyed, drove out, or subdued, the inhabitants thereof; how often they were brought into bondage by the bordering nations, whose rise and pretensions *Moses* sets down. Here we have recorded the several names and actions of the judges which God from time to time raised to the Israelites, to restore them to their first estate. Here we have an account of the establishment of a kingly government amongst them, which happened about the year 2909; as likewise of the division of this people into two kingdoms, which for three ages together were most opposite in their interests, and made great wars against each other, as well as against their neighbouring states. We find here the utter ruin of the most puissant of these two states, viz. that of *Israel* by the arms of the kings of *Assyria*, about the year of the world 3283; and after that, the destruction of that of *Judah* by *Nebuchadnezzar* king of the *Chaldeans*, anno mundi 3416. And last of all, we have an account of the *Jews* restoration by *Cyrus* king of *Persia*, and the state of the *Jews* under his successors.

The third thing observable is, That in the remaining books of the Old Testament we find several historical relations relating to both kingdoms, with several prophecies relating to their decay and restoration, as likewise many discourses of morality and piety; and that all these relations and prophecies appear to have been writ at such a time, and with those circumstances, which have a natural reference to what the other books recite to us, and an essential relation to the books and laws of *Moses*, which we find to be the foundation of all these prophecies, relations,

tions, and whatsoever else we find there concerning their government or religion.

The fourth is, That the books of the New Testament contain an exact relation of the life of Jesus Christ, who appeared to the world under the reign of *Tiberius*, of the establishment of his religion in the world, together with some disputes with the Jews, who refused to own him for the Messiah promised by the Prophets; and, lastly, prophecies, declaring what in process of time was to happen both to the Jews and Christians until the end of the world. These books take the truth of *Moses's* writings every where for granted, as also of the other sacred writings of the Old Testament, both historical, prophetical, and moral.

These four particulars do in a manner give us an entire idea of the holy Scripture; and we shall scarcely stand in need of ought else to manifest the truth of those writings, if we consider those undisputable matters of fact I am now to speak of, and will but make some very natural reflexions upon them.

The first is, That the Christians, notwithstanding their being divided into several sects and parties presently after our Saviour's time, have, and do still, in all places, every first day of the week, read the books of the New Testament translated into their respective languages; so that it appears absolutely impossible that any spurious writings should have been slipped in amongst them.

The second is, That as the Christians have had the books of the Old Testament amongst them in Greek these 1600 years, so the Heathens had them in that language 300 years before, being translated by order of one of the *Ptolemy's* kings of *Egypt*, whither a considerable party of the Jews were carried, after that *Alexander* the Great had conquered the greatest part of *Asia*, having overthrown the empire of *Persia*, to which the Jews were in subjection.

The third is, That though the Jews had not all the books of the Old Testament from the beginning of their commonwealth, they that followed the party of *Jeroboam*, and formed the kingdom of *Israel*, having only had the five books of *Moses* amongst them; yet, notwithstanding their irreconcilable hatred against the house of *David*, they have most religiously preserved the said books from *anno mundi* 3030, in which the divisions of the two kingdoms happened, even until this day.

The fourth and last is, That as the Jews every where, at this day, read the books of *Moses* and of the Prophets each sabbath-day (which is also observed by the Samaritans), and the Christians read them every first day of the week; so the Jews have always continued to read them for a long series of ages, as esteeming it a great part of the sanctification of the sabbath. Besides which, they also solemnly read them every seventh year, in obedience to a law of *Moses*, as being one of the principal parts of their religion.

I say, that the sole consideration of these matters of fact (which are indisputable) are sufficient to prove in general the truth of the books of the Old and New Testament.

First then, I affirm, that it is as ridiculous to maintain, that the books of the Old and New Testament, translated into so many languages, cited by an infinite number of authors, and which have been the

subject of various disputes from the very times of the Apostles, or soon after, should be supposititious, as to aver that the books of *Justinian*, or *Mahomet's* Alcoran, have been falsely obtruded on the world under their names. I speak now only of the books themselves, not of the truth of the history they contain.

Secondly, It is ridiculous to suppose that the books of the Old Testament were forged since the time of *Ptolemy Philadelphus*, forasmuch as they have been in the hands of the heathens themselves ever since that time.

Thirdly, It is as inconsistent to suppose them contrived since the time of the separation of the ten tribes from *Judah*, because we find the books of *Moses* among the Samaritans, who have preserved them ever since their revolt, without any other change but what is incident to all manuscripts that pass through many hands.

I grant indeed that the Samaritans have none of the other books of the Old Testament; but this being to be looked upon only as an effect of their departure from the kingdom of *Judah*, it cannot in the least shake the certainty we have of those books. For, first, the three other tribes had them, and preserved them with the greatest care, esteeming them of Divine authority. Secondly, there were also reasons of state which made the kings of *Israel* not to regard the divisions made by *Jehoiakim* of the land of *Canaan*, nor the authority of the priesthood; which reasons of state (hereafter mentioned) were the cause why the ten tribes would not allow the same authority to some of those books which were written before their revolt, as those of *Samuel*, and the writings of *David* and *Solomon*, which they did to the Pentateuch of *Moses*. Most of the others we know were penned since the division of the two kingdoms, and so did more particularly respect the kingdom of *Judah*, and some of them after the carrying away of the ten tribes by the Assyrians.

Thus we see the truth of these books, and more especially those of *Moses*, confirmed till the time of the revolt of the ten tribes, and confirmed beyond exception; at least far beyond the certainty we can have of the truth of any other book in the world. It remains only now to examine, whether as to the books of *Moses* we find not the same certainty, when we look back from the departure of the ten tribes to the time of *Moses*; that is to say, whether there be the least probability that they were forged in any part of that interval of about 580 years.

I say then, in the fourth place, that it is no less ridiculous to suppose them forged during that period. First, because it is impossible that these books should have been forged in the form we now see them, but that the forgery must have been apparent to all the world. Nothing could be more notorious, than whether the Jews did read the law of *Moses* every sabbath-day in all their families or synagogues, and every seventh year besides: nothing was of more easy observation than whether they did keep their three solemn feasts, viz. that of the passover, pentecost, and of tabernacles: nothing could be more apparent than whether the Jews did obey the laws contained in the Pentateuch, whether relating to particular persons, to tribes, or their lands, and the manner of possessing of them. Indeed, nothing can be imagined more absurd, than to suppose

an insensible change wrought either in the form of their civil government, or the ceremonies of their religion.

Indeed it is an unsufferable piece of boldness to charge the Jews with forging these books of *Moses*, or adulterating of them in this period of time, when it appears they have kept them without any alteration for the space of 2700 years, as hath been shewed already. If it be said, that the Jews being divided into two kingdoms, and dispersed into distant countries, were not in a condition to forge or adulterate any of the said books, because it might easily have been discovered; it may be answered, that the same reasons took place in this interval of 580 years: for, from the time of *Moses* to *Rehoboam*, they were not only greatly divided amongst themselves, but almost continually subject to neighbouring states, who subdued them by turns, as we see in the book of *Judges*.

Moreover we are to take notice, First, that these books of *Moses* are the rise and foundation of the laws and customs of the heathens, as well as of their fictions, which we shall have occasion to point at in the sequel of this discourse.

Secondly, that the history contained in the Pentateuch is evidently confirmed by the following books of *Joshua* and *Judges*, which have an essential reference to the same, and contain a relation of the public acts of many nations, attested and acknowledged by heathen authors, who were the mortal enemies of the Jews.

Thirdly, that the said books are so closely linked and related to those public and known actions, that it is impossible to separate the laws they contain from the matters of fact attested by Pagan history, or to be ignorant that the form of the Jewish government was nothing else but an execution of the laws contained in the Pentateuch, which equally lays down that platform of their policy and worship.

My business at present only is to hint these general reflexions concerning the truth of the books of the Old and New Testament; though the sequel will oblige me to make some more particular reflexions upon each book, when I shall come to consider the several relations they contain.

I now come to the matter in hand, beginning with the book of *Genesis*; where we find an account of the creation of the world, the forming of man, the fall, the promise of the Messiah, the propagation of mankind, the deluge, with other matters, until the death of *Joseph*, which contains the history of the world for the space of 2369 years.

C H A P. IV.

That the Testimony of *MOSES* concerning the Creation of the World, and the Promise of the Messiah, is unquestionable.

FORASMUCH as amongst those matters which *Moses* relates in the book of *Genesis*, that of the Creation of the World in seven days, and of the Promise of the Messiah, are such upon which all the rest do

depend (as I shall shew hereafter), it is evident that I must make it my business in a special manner to evince the truth of the same.

Towards the confirmation of which matters of fact; the one of which is, that God created a first man; the other, that God had promised in due time to send the *Messiah* for redemption of mankind from the punishment of sin; I shall propose the following remarks.

Moses, the great law-giver of the *Jews*, laid these two matters of fact as the basis of the laws he was to publish; and he relates them to us, as things which were not only known to him, and some others of the *Jewish* nation, but to all the people of the world, and particularly the whole nation amongst whom he lived.

To understand the force of this argument, we must mind three things: the first is, the nature of the matters themselves; the other is, the character of him that relates them; and the third, the use *Moses* makes of them.

For the first, nothing was more needful to be known than these two things before us; they were matters which concern the whole world, and of which every one ought to be informed; they are matters about which it is not easy to be deceived, every one being in a condition to satisfy himself about them, and of which consequently they could not but be most thoroughly informed.

I dare maintain that there are no facts in profane history of importance comparable to these of the creation of the world, and the promise of the *Messiah*, as *Moses* has related them.

2. And as for the author who relates these points, it is as plain that his character did wonderfully contribute to the making of his book famous. He was a man illustrious, as well by reason of his education, as the rank he held amongst men; a man equally exposed to the judgment of enemies and friends, and who could not vent the least thing contrary to truth, in matters of great importance, without seeing himself immediately refuted, or rather without exposing himself to public scorn.

Besides I aver, and am ready to maintain, that we find no author of so illustrious a character as *Moses* was, or who is distinguished with so many essential marks of faithfulness and veracity, as appears throughout the whole tenour of his writings.

3. This will appear more evidently when we consider the use to which *Moses* designs these two relations of the creation of the world, and the promise of the *Messiah*.

In a word, his design was not, in furnishing his books with the recital of these important facts, to engage others to read them with more attention, or to get himself reputation by exciting a curiosity in people for his books. This would not have been becoming the gravity and wisdom of so great a legislator, of whom all succeeding ages have borrowed their laws.

It is apparent, that his end in the recording of these matters was to inspire with a sense of piety and religion, those who were committed to his charge.

This is that which in general we may observe about these matters; but more particularly it is certain, that *Moses* his end, in recording the

oracles by which God promised to *Abraham* the establishing his posterity in the land of *Canaan*, was to represent to the *Jews* the right they had to that land, according to the design and intent of the Divine wisdom.

But without making this particular reflexion, it is clear that the law took its beginning at the twelfth of *Exodus*, where God prescribes to his people the manner of celebrating the passover; at least, this is the first law which God gave them through the ministry of *Moses*: but forasmuch as *Moses* his end was to justify in the minds of his people, the design he had to make them leave *Egypt*, as well as their pretensions to the land of *Canaan*, whither he was to lead them; it was natural for him to lay before them the ground of those pretensions, which he could not do without relating the whole series of the history until the time of their bondage in *Egypt*, which we read in *Genesis*; the greatest part of which only concerns the ancestors of that people, after that *Moses* had first laid down the grounds of religion, and that which was known to all nations.

Let us now imagine to ourselves a man endeavouring all of a sudden to introduce into the world the belief of things so far distant from common apprehension as these two points must needs be, viz. that of the creation, and the promise of Christ, in case we suppose them generally unknown: let us yet further conceive a man not only relating those things, but making them the foundation of a new sort of laws never before heard of. Is there any wit or judgment in such an undertaking? Can we therefore suppose that *Moses*, whose writings testify his great wisdom, should ever have entertained such unaccountable thoughts?

I dare aver that there was never any legislator so stupid and inconsiderate, as to pretend to engage a whole people to submit themselves to the yoke of obedience, and to receive a great number of laws respecting their civil government and religion, by declaring to them two fictions, which they had never before had the least idea.

It is also very considerable, that these things are not recited by *Moses* in a preface to the Decalogue, as if then first they had been proposed to *Moses*, or the people by God; but *Moses* sets them down as truths known to them all, and as principles universally admitted, and such as the mere mentioning of them could not but strongly engage the *Jews* to render a ready obedience to the laws which God gave to *Moses* in their presence of the Divine authority, of which their very senses were convinced.

Let us also consider the nature of those things, the relation of which *Moses* has joined with these two general points, to make an impression on the minds of the *Jews*. Let us consider the account he gives them of their ancestors, nearer or farther off, whom he represents as equally informed of these matters, as having severally delivered the knowledge of them to their children, and having joined to these first truths of the creation, and the promise of a Saviour, many other notions thereon depending, and which tied their hopes and expectations to the land of *Canaan*. And now judge whether *Moses* were not to be accused of great folly and senselessness, if he had proceeded to make such a vast people (all of a sudden) to receive for truths publicly and generally owned, what indeed was nothing but the most ridiculous and ill-cohering romance that ever was broached.

Now, since as it is visible (taking in the circumstances I have hinted) that the authority of such an historian and law-giver as *Moses* was, relating such important matters, cannot be called in question; it follows, that the Atheist can have nothing to object against his testimony, with the least shadow or pretence of reason. So that we may already affirm, that there is nothing better attested than the creation of the world, and the promise of Christ, which are the immovable foundations of the Christian Religion.

Nevertheless, for a more evident conviction, we are willing, before we draw this conclusion, to make it appear how weak and inconsiderable all those objections are, which Atheists can possibly frame against what *Moses* relates concerning these matters.

What can they with reason object? Perhaps they'll say, that *Moses* is not the author of *Genesis*, but that it was foisted in under his name, and consequently, that whatsoever is built upon the authority of *Moses* and his evidence is all without ground; or they may object, that, if *Moses* be indeed the author of *Genesis*, he lived at such a distance of time from the things which he relates, that it makes void the authority of his writings. They may moreover alledge, that *Moses* relates things impossible, and of which therefore those that mentioned them before, the things themselves being so long since past and done, could not be fully informed of, and that they may well be supposed greatly changed and altered by a tradition of so many ages. They may also alledge, that according to the common opinion, *Moses* penned not these things as an historian, but as a prophet; and that the apprehension of most concerning his books are, that he wrote of things whereof the knowledge before his time was very obscure and confused, or rather were generally unknown.

They may object against these relations of *Moses*, that which the most ancient people, such as the *Egyptians*, *Chaldeans*, and *Chinese*, alledge for their antiquity, which far surpasseth the date of the world according to *Moses*.

These are the principal ways to assault the truths which *Moses* relates, either by maintaining with the Atheists, on one hand, that the things which *Moses* relates are indeed mentioned by the authors, but that they forged them themselves; or that *Moses*, being an able and refined politician, designed, by creating a belief of these matters in the *Jews*, to make them more submissive and obedient to him.

In a word, it may be said, that supposing the books of *Genesis* to be written by *Moses*, it was an easy matter for him to dictate whatsoever he pleased to a people who were under a law that made it capital to call in question the truth of his relations, or the authority of his laws.

This certainly is the farthest to which the height of obstinacy can carry this matter, and the very last refuge of the strongest prejudice. But it is an easy matter to confound the Atheists and Libertines in every one of these articles, and to shew that all their objections do in effect serve for nothing else but to make a more lively impression of this argument taken from matter of fact, which I have undertaken to set forth in a full and clear light.

C H A P. V.

That MOSES is the Author of the Book of GENESIS.

I SHALL in the sequel of this discourse make it appear, that we cannot with reason contest the authority of a tradition which hath those characters which we find in the relations contained in the book of *Genesis*: the only thing that can be questioned in this matter is, whether *Moses*, the great captain of the *Israelites*, and founder of their commonwealth, be the author of it. This therefore is the thing which we ought solidly to evince.

Though it seems that we might dispense with this trouble; forasmuch as it is easy to shew, that the greatest part of the most considerable events, which are recorded in the book of *Genesis*, were generally believed by others as well as the *Jews*.

At least it must be granted, that these matters have given occasion to most of their fables, viz. to that of the chaos; to that of the marriage of *Peleus* and *Thetis*; for the forming of man, to that of *Prometheus*; to that of *Jupiter's* continued laughter for the seven first days of his life, which they looked upon as the original of the solemnity of the seventh day, known amongst the heathens; to that of the golden age, and of the deluge; to the name of *Deucalion*; to the fable of *Janus*, to that of the division of the world amongst *Saturn's* sons; to the name of *Jupiter Hammon*; to the fable of the *Titans*, and of the changing of women into statues of stone; to the stories of the incest the gods committed with their daughters; to that of the firing of the world by *Phaëton*; and to a great number of other fictions, which cannot be otherwise explained, as the learned have shewn at large.

Whosoever was the author of *Genesis*, whether *Moses* or another, sure it is that he was exactly informed of the matters he relates, and that he lived soon after *Joseph*.

First then I say, that it appears he was fully informed of those matters of which he treats: he sets down the names of the heads or fathers of the several nations of the world, and does it so, that what he saith doth very well agree with what the most ancient historians have left us concerning that matter; he speaks of these nations, of the countries they possessed, and their kings, as of things he was perfectly informed of; he very carefully distinguishes the original of these several nations: and the same being at that time commonly known, no historian could represent them otherwise than they were, without exposing himself to the laughter of all, by endeavouring to mix fables with relations of this nature.

In the second place, I say, that this book was writ by a man that lived soon after *Joseph*: he speaks very exactly of what *Joseph* did in his place of chief minister to *Pharaoh*; in particular, he sets down the first original of the fifth penny which the *Egyptians*, so many ages after, continued to pay to their kings, being a thing which no *Egyptian* could be ignorant of.

And lastly, it is visible, that this book serves for an introduction to *Exodus*, and the following books, which have no other foundation but the truth of those things which are related to us there, and do throughout allude and refer to the several passages of it; and that all matters of religion and worship contained in them, are founded upon the truth of the creation, and the promise of the *Messiah*, which we find in *Genesis*; and upon the truth of all those other succeeding matters of fact, until the coming of the children of *Israel* into *Egypt*, when *Joseph* was chief favourite and minister of *Pharaoh*.

But we have yet a more easy way to make out that *Moses*, whose history is contained in *Exodus* and the following books, is the author of *Genesis*.

For first, it cannot be denied that the heathens themselves have acknowledged *Moses* for the most ancient law-giver: for this, we have the testimonies of *Plato*, *Polemus*, *Artapanus*, *Pythagoras*, *Theopompus*, and *Diodorus Siculus*, who places *Moses* in the front of six of the most ancient law-givers thus; *Moses*, *Sauchnis*, *Sesonchosis*, *Bachoris*, *Amasis*, and *Darius* father of *Xerxes*.

But further, if, when the *Lacedemonians* tell us of the laws of their law-giver *Lycurgus*, and the *Athenians* of those of their *Solon*, we think ourselves obliged to believe them, because naturally every nation is supposed to be a faithful depositary of the laws of him who first founded their government; yea, if we do not in the least doubt of these relations, though there be no people at this day who live according to the laws of *Lycurgus* or *Solon*; can any valuable reason be imagined, for us to doubt whether *Moses* wrote the book of *Genesis*, when an entire nation have constantly averred that he did so? I say, when all the *Jews*, who continue at this day, do in all places, where they are scattered throughout the world equally, and with one consent, maintain that they received this book from him, together with the laws and worship therein contained? nay, when it is notorious that many of them have suffered martyrdom in confirmation of this truth?

I omit now to mention the consent of the Christians, who, though they be not descended of *Abraham*, and do not observe the greatest part of the laws of *Moses*, yet do not cease highly to defend this truth throughout the world, the Gospel in their sense being nothing else but the literal accomplishment of that promise, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent*. I shall shew, in the sequel of these my Reflexions, with how much justice they assent to this truth; but at present I tie myself only to the testimonies of the *Jews*, and that which confirms the authority thereof.

C H A P. VI.

That the Book of GENESIS could not be forged under the name of MOSES.

I SHOULD never have done, should I go about to set down all the observations which might be made in comparing this book of *Genesis* with other histories commonly known to the world, and whose faithfulness is unquestionable. Without entering upon this comparison, we may boldly assert, that there is no history in the world whose author we can be so sure of, as that *Moses* was the penman of *Genesis*.

But I go further, and assert, that the *Jews* could not be mistaken in the testimonies they give to this truth; which I prove by these two remarks.

The first is, That their observations, both civil and religious, are at this day founded upon no other principles than those which we find in *Genesis*: as, for instance, they compute the beginning of their day from the preceding evening, they keep the sabbath, they observe circumcision, they abstain from eating the muscle which is in the hollow of the thigh, &c. The observation of which laws is indeed prescribed to them in the other books of *Moses*; but the occasion and ground of them all is nowhere to be found but in *Genesis*, to which all these laws have a natural relation.

The second is, That the book of *Genesis* taking for granted, that the posterity of *Abraham*, as well as his ancestors, had always observed the sabbath and circumcision; and the books of *Moses* ordering the same to be constantly read in every family, to which the sabbath-day was more peculiarly appropriated, and the whole to be read over every seventh year, as we know the *Jews* practice was, according to the law of *Moses*; the first of which injunctions they practice still in all places, and have left off the other, only because they cannot do it now they are out of their own land; I say, supposing all this, it is absolutely impossible that any other than *Moses* could have made this book to be received.

The forgery, at the beginning, would have been palpable, even to children themselves: as, for example, let us suppose that *Solomon* had formed a design of deceiving the people, in publishing the book of *Genesis* for a book of *Moses*; is it possible he should so far impose on his people, as to make them to receive the said book all at once, as that which had been constantly read in their families every seventh day, and year, and that for 600 years before his time? and therefore, as a book that had been so long in all their families, though indeed it was never heard of by them before that time.

If an impostor can create a belief in others, that he hath some secret communication with the Deity, those who are thus persuaded by him, will easily submit themselves to his laws; but it is absolutely impossible that a whole people should all at once forget whatsoever they have learned

or heard of their parents or forefathers, and instead thereof admit of tales forged at pleasure.

Some nations have been so ridiculous, to derive themselves from a fabulous original; but they never fell into such mistakes about those things which were at no great distance from the time in which they lived.

Besides, we know that these fabulous originals never made so lively an impression upon the minds of a whole nation, especially the learned amongst them, as generally to be believed; but we rather find, that they have endeavoured to reconcile them to truth, by shewing something else was hinted thereby, as we may see by the explication the heathens themselves have given us of all their fables, and utterly rejected those which they could not reconcile to good sense.

But in this case, we find a whole nation to this very day maintaining all the matters of fact related in *Genesis*, and in particular that of the creation, as of matters whose memorial they have constantly celebrated every seventh day, since the time they first happened.

Lastly, It cannot be denied but that this book was constantly used to be read amongst the *Jews*, especially on the sabbath-day, and that under the name of *Moses*; for instance, since the time of Jesus Christ, or since that of *David*: neither can it be denied, but this constant reading was observed by virtue of a law contained in the said book. Now, if this law has always been in this book from the first appearing of it, which cannot be questioned, how was it possible to forge and foist in this book under the name of *Moses*, the founder of the *Jewish* government? I say, this book, which, besides all this, contains such extraordinary matters, and is the very foundation of all their religion.

I will not repeat here what I mentioned in the third chapter, to make the vanity of those men appear, who imagine the book of *Genesis*, and the four that follow it, might have been forged by others, under *Moses* his name: yet I think I ought, before I proceed further, to remove a seeming difficulty, which is often alledged by this sort of people: for, say they, it cannot be that these books were ever read with that care and constancy we speak of, because a time can be pointed at, wherein the said book was wholly unknown in the kingdom of *Judah*; and indeed, the history plainly informs us, that the book of the law was found again in the reign of *Josias*; from whence they infer that, if it were then unknown, it might as well be forged.

But indeed they may conclude from hence, that which willingly we allow them, that there was a time wherein ungodliness did prevail, and idolatry was publicly established in the kingdom of *Judah* itself, yet can they not from this instance draw any other consequence which might support their pretensions.

They must needs acknowledge first, that the books of *Moses* were not only amongst the three tribes, but also amongst the ten, since the time of their revolt under *Rehoboam*; that they who were carried by *Salmannasar* into the land of *Assyria*, had the said books amongst them, as well as those of the ten tribes who were left in their own country. Thus we see, that when the king of *Assyria* sent some of the priests of

Samaria

Samaria to instruct the colony which he had settled in their country, in the law of God, it is not said that those priests went to borrow the law of *Moses* from them of *Judah*, nor that the said law was altogether unknown in that country; but only that they had formerly violated the law of God, in serving strange gods, as they still did; but that, withal, they kept the law of God, which to this day is yet found among their posterity.

Secondly, It is evident that, though the wickedness and violence of *Manasseh* caused a great change in matters of religion, yet not so great but that his subjects notwithstanding had still the books of *Moses* amongst them, the blood which he shed in *Jerusalem* was an evident sign that there were some godly men left amongst them, who continued true to their religion, and observed the laws of God. Besides, if we consider his repentance, we must conclude, that towards the end of his reign he did in some degree re-establish the purity of that religion he had before profaned, a main part of which was the expounding and reading of the books of *Moses*, according to those laws before mentioned.

In the third place it is visible, that the reason why *Hilkiah*, having found the book of the law in the temple as they were cleansing and repairing it, sent the same to *Josiah*, was not because there was no other such book left in *Judah*, but because the said book being written by the hand of *Moses* himself, there seemed to be something very extraordinary in the finding of it at that very time when they were endeavouring a reformation; and it was this circumstance which did in a more particular manner excite the zeal of this good prince. And indeed, if we suppose that *Josiah* had never before seen the book of the law, how could he have applied himself to the reforming of his country, his people, and the temple, in the manner which is recorded in the book of Kings? How could a sufficient number of copies of it be dispersed over all his kingdom in an instant, to inform the people about the ceremonies of the passover, which soon after was so solemnly celebrated by them? Or, how is it possible that the *Levites*, the priests, and people, could have been all of the sudden instructed in all the points to be observed in the performing of that holy solemnity.

It is apparent that the sacred Historian did for no other reason take notice of this circumstance, that the book found was of *Moses's* own hand writing, but to make it appear that their devout respect for this book was not wholly stifled, as having been by them carefully hid from the fury of their idolatrous kings, and laid up in some secret place of the temple, where now they had so happily found it again.

Over and above what hath been said already, we are to observe, that how great soever the wickedness of the kings of *Judah* and *Israel* was, as well as that of their objects, yet the same generally consisted in nothing else but the imitation of the worship of their neighbour nations, as to some particulars, which though they were forbid by the law, yet they left the far greater part of their religion in full force. This we have an instance of in the time of *Ahab*, where we find *Elijah* reproaching the *Israelites* with the monstrous alliance they had made betwixt the worship of God and that of *Baal*, which queen *Jesabel* had introduced.

All this clearly proves, that the book of *Genesis*, which is the first of the books of *Moses*, was never forged under his name, since it was always owned as the writing of that famous author, and is still so acknowledged by the *Jews* at this day.

C H A P. VII.

That it appears from GENESIS, that the Sabbath was constantly observed from the Beginning of the World until MOSES.

THE other objection of the Atheists (supposing that *Moses* was the author of *Genesis*, as we have now proved) is this, that it seems absurd to give credit to the relations of a person who lived so many ages distant from the things he recites. To answer this objection, we must first of all declare to them, by what means the memory of the fact which *Moses* relates was preserved so lively and entire as to give *Moses* so distinct a knowledge of them, and that it was not in his power to forge or add any thing of his own, it being a thing known to the whole world as well as himself.

There is no way whereby we can more solidly evince that it is impossible the creation of the world should be forged by *Moses*, than by making it appear, that the law of the sabbath hath a natural relation to the creation of the world, and that it hath been always constantly observed from that time until *Moses*. The same also will help us clearly to conceive after what manner the memory of the promise of the *Messiah* hath been preserved so distinct amongst those that lived since the creation until *Moses*. We are no sooner informed that the sabbath is a solemn day, ordained at first to celebrate and perpetuate the memory of the creation, but we judge it impossible that so important an event, commemorated every seventh day, by virtue of a Divine law, should be an imposture. But forasmuch as this impossibility is grounded on these two propositions; the one, that God gave this law of the sabbath to the first man; the other, that the same was observed by his posterity ever since, till the time of *Moses*, and that God only removed it in the law given from mount *Sinai*: these are the truths I am now to clear; and it is of more importance to be proved, because, though the generality of authors, ancient and modern, *Jews* as well as *Christians*, are of this opinion, yet there are some of the Christian fathers who seem to deny that the sabbath was ever observed by the Patriarchs. But it will be an easy matter to prove from *Moses*, that the antiquity of the sabbath is such as I assert, and at the same time time to demonstrate the truth of the creation, as well as of the promise of *Messiah*, which in a manner immediately followed it.

Moses, in the second chapter of *Genesis*, expresses himself thus: *And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from*

from all his work, which he had created (a) : which words clearly evince a solemn consecration of the seventh day to God's service, by its being made a commemoration of his finishing the creation of the heavens and the earth.

But because it may be said, that the intent of *Moses* in this place was only to set down the reason why God set apart this day, of all others, to his service, by the law at mount *Sinai*, we are to take notice, that this appointment was made for man's sake, already placed in the garden of *Eden*. This we may gather from the order *Moses* observes : for he sets down first the formation of man on the sixth day, and his being placed in *Paradise*, which he gives a more particular account of in the second chapter ; and after these, he relates God's resting from his works, and the consecration of the sabbath, with the reason of that law which he imposed on man ; and then adds, *These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth, when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the heaven and the earth*. All that precedes these words, is only a relation of what passed in the seven first days ; and that which *Moses* sets down concerning God's blessing of the seventh day, and his consecrating it, ought as well to be accounted a law appointing the seventh day for his service, as those other blessings given to the creatures according to their kinds, are acknowledged as inviolable laws of God, by virtue whereof they subsist, and are perpetuated, each according to their kind, by the way of generation.

In the second place, it is very remarkable that the Patriarchs maintained a public worship, at least since the time of *Seth* ; which it was necessary should be determined to some certain day ; and since we find that even at this time they distinguished between beasts clean and unclean, with respect to their sacrifices, (which they could not do but from revelation) we have much more reason to conclude that God had set apart a time for his own worship and service.

And, indeed, there are many evident signs, that even then the seventh day was observed (b). I will not here peremptorily assert that ancient tradition of the *Jews* which tells us, that the ninety-second Psalm, whose title is a Psalm for the Sabbath, was made by *Adam* himself, who was made on the evening of the sabbath : but this I dare assert, that it is apparent, that what we read in the eighth chapter of *Genesis*, (c) about the deluge, doth refer to this custom, where we find *Noah* sending forth the dove and the raven on the seventh day, which plainly hints to us his observing of that day ; for it seems, that *Noah* having, in an especial manner, on that solemn day, implored the assistance of God in the assembly of his family, he expected a particular blessing from it.

And we cannot but make some reflexion on that which we read in the xxixth of *Genesis* concerning the term of a week set apart to the nuptials of *Leah*, where, at the twenty-seventh verse, *Laban* thus expresses himself : *Fulfil her week, and we will give thee this also, for the service which thou shalt serve with me yet seven other years* (d). This week here doth so plainly signify a week of days, that it cannot be more naturally expressed ; and, indeed, all generally understand by this week of the marriage-feast

of

(a) Gen. ii. 3.

(b) *Kimchi Præfat. in Psalmos.*

(c) Gen. viii. 10. 12.

(d) Gen. xxix. 27.

of *Leab*, that term of time which in succeeding ages hath been customary to allot to nuptial festivals, as appears from the book of *Esther*, where the wedding feast of *Vashti* lasted seven days; this term of seven days having so long since been consecrated to nuptial rejoicings.

The same we may also gather from the time which was ordinarily allotted to mourning for the dead; to which we find the Patriarchs allotted a term proportioned to that of their rejoicing. For as we see that the *Egyptians* mourned ten weeks for *Jacob*, because of his quality, as being the father of *Joseph*; so we find that *Joseph*, and those that accompanied him, mourned seven days at his interment in the land of *Canaan*; and as we find, that this custom was perpetually afterwards observed by the *Jews*, as appears from *Ecclesiasticus* xxii. 12. so likewise we find the same observed by the *Asiatics*, as may be seen in the history of *Ammianus Marcellinus*, at the beginning of his nineteenth book; and from thence it passed to the Christians, as we find in *St. Ambrose* (e).

Thirdly, It appears from *Exod.* vii. 25. that God observed seven days (f) after he had smote the river to change the waters thereof into blood; from whence the *Jews* conclude, that the three plagues, viz. that of blood, of frogs, and of lice, abode on the land of *Egypt* six days, and were withdrawn on the seventh, which is the sabbath.

We may also gather, if we calculate the time exactly, that the *Jews* in *Egypt* observed the sabbath. We find from the history of their departure out of *Egypt*, that the same happened on a *Thursday*, being the fifteenth of the month *Nisan*; and the day in which they sung those hymns of deliverance, was the sabbath which God had particularly set apart for this week.

It is also evident from *Exod.* xvi. that the keeping of the sabbath was observed by the *Israelites*, before the law was given on mount *Sinai*. For we find God speaking there concerning the sabbath, not as of a thing newly instituted, but as of an ancient law, which they were not to transgress by gathering the manna on that day; for he orders them to gather a double portion the sixth day, and not to gather any on the seventh. We see that the *Israelites* resting on the seventh day is here supposed a known and customary thing, prescribed to them by a law of old.

They who went forth to gather manna on the seventh day are represented as transgressors of a known law, as appears from the words of the Lord to *Moses*. *How long refuse ye to keep my commandments and my laws?* *Moses* also speaks of the sabbath, which was to be the next day, as of a thing customary, and received amongst them. *To-morrow* (saith he, at v. 23.) *is the rest of the sabbath of holiness unto the Lord*; words which would have been unintelligible to the *Israelites*, and expressed a law altogether impracticable, in case they had been destitute of any further knowledge concerning it, and had not been acquainted that it was the very day in which the great work of creation had been finished.

My fourth observation I take from the very words of the Decalogue, where first of all we find God speaking in this manner, *Remember the sabbath*

(e) *De fide Resur. in obitu Sar.* p. 321.

(f) Seven days were fulfilled after that the Lord had smote the river. *Talkut* in h. l.

sabbath day (g); which words clearly import, that the law he gave, was not a new law, but indeed as old as the world, and which had been observed by their forefathers. It seems probable also that God expresses himself in these terms, because the tyranny of *Pharaoh* had forced them to break this law, by obliging them to deliver their tale of bricks every day, without excepting the sabbath, which before he had allowed them to keep.

This is explained very distinctly in the fifth of *Exodus*, and seems to have been the occasion of *Moses's* demanding straw of *Pharaoh* for the *Israelites* to go and sacrifice; in answer to which demand, *Pharaoh* (h) expresses himself in terms which shew that formerly they had observed a rest on that day: however it be, yet thus much is apparent, that God commands them to make their bond servants to observe the sabbath, because the *Egyptians*, by their example, inclined them not to be very careful in exempting them from all labour on that day.

Moreover, in the second place, we are to take notice, that in the last words of the fourth commandment, God speaks of it as of a thing formerly appointed and determined by him, saying, *For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, and rested the seventh day, wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it*; which words have a manifest and undeniable reference to that which happened the seventh day after the creation, and to the law then given to man concerning it.

We may gather from the fourth chapter of the epistle to the *Hebrews*, that the sense which we have put upon the third verse of the second of *Genesis*, is the same which the *Jews* have always had of it. The Apostle, discoursing from those words of *David*, *Psal. xcvi. To whom I swear in my wrath, that they should not enter into my rest*, doth suppose a threefold rest; the first of which is the rest of the sabbath, of which mention is made in the second of *Genesis*, where we have the first institution of it; the second was the rest in the land of *Canaan* promised to the *Jews* upon their enduring all those trials in the wilderness; the third, the rest in heaven, of which the two foregoing were but the figures. He argues therefore that these words of *David* could not be understood concerning the sabbath day, forasmuch as from the beginning of the world men entered into that rest of the sabbath; and he proves this, by that passage in *Genesis* of which he only cites the first words, viz. that *God rested the seventh day from all his works*; as supposing that the *Jews*, to whom he wrote, had no need of having the following words quoted to them, which tells us, that *God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it*: that is, he consecrated the same to his worship and service, forasmuch as nothing was more publicly and universally known amongst them, the observation of the sabbath being a thing generally received, even before the giving of the law.

And, indeed, though *Philo* the *Jew* be of opinion that the practice of solemnizing that day had suffered some interruption, and that for this reason the law of the sabbath was given to *Moses*, yet it is well known first of all, that *Aristobolus* the *Peripatetic* (i), in a treatise dedicated by him to *Ptolemy*, surnamed *Philadelphus*, cites several passages of *Homer*, *Hesiod*,

(g) *Exod. xx. 8.*

(h) *Exod. v. 5.*

(i) *Euseb. præp. Evang. l. 13. c. 12.*

Hesiod, and *Linus*, heathen poets, which mention the seventh day as a festival and solemn day, because all things were finished in the same.

In the next place, it is notorious, that if some of the fathers, as *Julius Martyr* and *Tertullian* writing against the *Jews*, have denied that the Patriarchs observed the seventh day, they did so rather with regard to the rigour of that law which forbade all manner of work on that day upon pain of death, (which was superadded by God to the first law of the sabbath) than to the observation of the sabbath, as it was a day appointed to make a solemn commemoration of the creation of the world.

In a word, we are to take notice, that the difference which God makes between the sabbath observed by the Patriarchs, and that which he appointed to the *Jews*, did consist in two things. First, in that God did impose an absolute necessity upon the *Jews* to abstain from all manner of work, even to the very dressing of meat, necessary for the support of life: we find this distinction clearly expressed in the law which God gave concerning the first and seventh day of the feast of unleavened bread; for he absolutely forbids all manner of work on these two days, as much as on the sabbath, even the preparing of necessary food, which he permits the five other days, forbidding only servile laborious works.

Secondly, In that the working on that day by the law is made punishable with death, which was not so before; which innovation, and new rigour of the law, established by God, was authorized by the punishing of him who had gathered sticks on the sabbath-day; whereas we find, that before the law was given upon mount *Sinai*, God did not command those *Jews* to be punished with death, who went forth the seventh day to gather manna, according to their ancient custom of dressing their meat on that day.

Let me add this further, that though the Apostles had abolished the rigour of the law concerning the sabbath, introduced by *Moses*, yet they themselves observed it; which practice of theirs, in all probability, gave occasion to the Christians, for almost four centuries, to keep the sabbath as well as the first day of the week, solemnizing both the days, the one as a commemoration of the creation of the world, and the other of the resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

But whatever judgment may be passed on this last remark, it is very evident from *Genesis* and *Exodus*,—first, that the law of the sabbath was observed before *Moses*: secondly, that this observation was by the first Patriarchs propagated among the heathens also, as well as the idea of the creation; or as the practice of sacrificing, with the other parts of religious worship, the original whereof may be seen in the book of *Genesis*, as we shall make appear in our following discourse.

After all this, we must conclude against the Atheist, that either *Moses* must have imprudently laid a snare for himself, in forging a matter of fact of which not only the *Jews*, but all the world, were able to convince him, since there were none amongst them but must needs be conscious whether they had observed the sabbath in commemoration of the creation, as he relates it, or no; or else, that the creation of the world, being a matter of fact so generally known, and the memorial of it solemnized every seventh day by all those who preceded him, must needs be an uncontested and immovable truth, which I shall farther evince

by those observations which I shall raise from the dependence and connexion which the matters related by *Moses* in *Genesis* have with the creation, and the promise of the *Messiah*. This is my business at present; in performing of which I shall make it appear, that nothing can be imagined more rational and coherent than the relations of *Moses*, in which the Atheists imagine that they discover so great absurdities.

C H A P. VIII.

That ADAM was convinced of his Creation, by Reason and Authority.

THOUGH it might be thought more natural, in these our disquisitions about the history of *Genesis*, to begin with those matters which happened near the time of *Moses*, and from them to pass to those at a greater distance; yet I have chosen rather to follow the thread of *Moses* his discourse, hoping that this method will afford more light to these our Reflexions; at least, it will spare me the trouble of frequent repetitions, which in the other way I should be necessarily obliged to. I begin then with this, *That Adam was convinced of his Creation, both by Reason and Authority.*

The creation of *Adam* being a thing of that nature, that he must first be convinced of it himself, before he could persuade his posterity to entertain the belief of it, it is worth our inquiry to know what ways he had to assure himself that he was indeed created in that manner as *Moses* relates. And, forasmuch as the certainty of this tradition depends upon the authority of *Adam*, whom *Moses* supposes to have been the first deliverer of it, it is plain that we must be assured that *Adam* could not deceive himself in this matter, as it is evident enough that he would not deceive his children, when he took care to instruct them concerning it.

As to his own existence, he could not but be as strongly persuaded of it as we are of ours, all the difficulty lying in the manner how he came to exist. Now, there were two ways by which *Adam* might inform himself of this, viz. by reason, and the testimony of authority. He could easily find out this secret by a rational reflexion; or, he might also be persuaded of it by God himself, who had created him, not to mention now any information which he might have from the angels who were witnesses of his creation.

It appears that *Adam*, whose tradition *Moses* has recorded, supposes that he had learnt of God himself the manner of his own formation. God speaks to *Adam*, and sanctifies the seventh day; that is, obliges *Adam* to keep the memorial of his creation; he ties him, by a law, to commemorate his creation fifty-two times a year, and to render him continual thanks for the being he had received.

But, forasmuch as *Adam* was capable of making reflexions upon those several matters which God had made known to him concerning his

creation, I say, it cannot be imagined, but that he must have taken these things into consideration, and have been convinced of the truth of them by the light of reason.

The truth of a relation consisting in its conformity with the matter related, it appears clearly that *Adam* could certainly know the truth of what God had declared to him, by examining the things themselves.

We may distinguish several propositions in the revelation God made to him concerning the manner of his creation.

The first was, That his body was taken from the earth.

The next, That his soul was not framed before his body.

The third, That his soul had been joined to his body, to constitute one individual person,

The fourth, That he was created in a full and perfect age.

The fifth, That his wife was formed of a rib, taken out of his side, during the time that he was cast into a deep sleep.

These are the truths I propose as instances, the rather because there is not one of them of which *Adam* himself could be a witness.

And yet I affirm, there is none of these which he could not be assured of by the light of reason, being convinced of them by the same means which assured him of the existence of his soul and body. The consideration therefore of these two matters was of good use to confirm the revelation which God had vouchsafed him concerning his creation, of which he could not be a witness himself.

That his body was taken from the earth, *Adam* might easily infer from the food that maintained it; for what is the matter of man's nourishment, but a digested and disguised earth? And finding himself, at first, in a perfect estate, it was natural for him to judge that his body had been thus at once framed of the earth, without passing those several degrees of growth whereby children arrive to their just stature.

And he might as easily be assured, that his soul was not formed before his body. The soul is a being, conscious of his own operations and thoughts; wherefore he needed only make this reflexion: *My soul has had neither knowledge nor thoughts before it was united to my body; therefore my soul did not exist before it.* No great study was required to make so natural a conclusion as this is.

Again, how could he be ignorant of the union of his soul with the body? Was it not obvious for him to be assured hereof, by the ready obedience which he saw his body yield unto his soul? He had the idea of a tree, as well as the idea of his foot or arm; whence it was easy for him to reflect thus: *How comes it to pass, that I command my feet and my arms, and that I cannot do the same to a stone or tree, though I have the idea of the one as well as of the other?* Must not this proceed from a nearer union it hath with the one than with the other? He knew that this union continued during his sleep, and was independent of his will. In a word, he had the same proofs of this union, which we have of it at present; only they were in him much more lively, because our infancy makes us in some sort ignorant of the nature of our souls, our souls accustoming themselves, by little and little, to depend upon the senses, so

as not to be able to raise themselves, without some trouble, above their operations.

Neither was it less evident to *Adam*, that he was produced at a perfect age. He saw that his food maintained life, and he knew assuredly that he had not taken any but very lately: how then could he attain to that stature without that help? Or how was it that he found himself now ready to faint, if he deferred to take it, which formerly he had not felt the want of? These reflexions made it unquestionable to him that he was formed in a perfect age.

And lastly, it was yet more easy for him to be persuaded of the truth of God's revelation concerning the forming of *Eve*: he needed but to count his own ribs and those of his wife; for he could not find one less in himself than in his wife, without being fully satisfied in that matter.

These propositions, with many others of like nature, being such as *Adam* could be assured of the truth of, by making reflexion either on himself, or on plants, or living creatures, greatly confirming his belief in the Divine testimony concerning his creation, we may easily infer, that *Adam* could not deceive himself about that matter.

C H A P. IX.

That ADAM was confirmed, by his own Experience, in the Persuasion he had entertained concerning his Creation.

WHEN I take for granted that *Adam* could satisfy himself concerning the truth of God's revelation, by some natural and easy reflexions, I do not find how any can think strange of this hypothesis; except some, perchance, who might think that I make *Adam* too contemplative.

But if any will be pleased to make these following observations, they will justify me, that I have attributed nothing to him but what agrees exactly with his character.

The first is, That *Adam* finding himself, immediately upon his creation, at his full and perfect age, he was void of those prejudices which the ignorance and weakness of his infancy are the cause of; his mind was not tainted with popular errors, which oft are so great a hindrance to the knowledge of truth: he had not yet received any ill impression; and when afterwards he was so credulous as to give way to a temptation, his experience proved a most powerful means to inform his reason, and withdraw him from his error.

Besides, we suppose here, that the Divine testimony which acquainted him with the particular circumstances of his creation, was precedent to the reflexions *Adam* made, and indeed was the cause of them. If we suppose some contryman, not capable of discovering of himself, all on a sudden

sudden, the manner how such a thing came to pass, yet this is certain, that his reason alone will be able to satisfy him whether the thing happened in that manner which the relation of it imports; he need but consult the rules of probability, to be determined in this matter.

Adam had not only the advantage of being formed at a perfect age, of being acquainted, by the mouth of God himself, about the creation of the world, &c. and of living so many ages, which gave him leisure enough to consider the probability of what God had revealed to him, to examine the grounds and certainty of it, and, in a word, to judge whether the said reflexions were to be rejected as fabulous, or to be relied on as of most certain and evident truth; but over and above all this, *Adam* could rationally assure himself of the manner how the things (which he had not seen) were done, by the experience he had of other matters which were comprehended in the Divine revelation.

The manner how his body had been formed of the earth, was, I confess, a thing difficult to be conceived; but the production of an infant like to himself, by the way of generation, which he afterwards was assured of by experience, was sufficient to confirm his mind in the belief of the Divine revelation; the way of generation being at least as much, if not more difficult to comprehend, as the manner of his creation.

We have great reason to suppose that, as it was *Adam's* duty, so he did really make those reflexions I have attributed to him, if we consider that God gave him a law proportioned to the state in which he was created; for this law supposes that *Adam* owned himself God's subject, that he considered God as his great benefactor, that he hoped for rewards from him, and feared to be punished by him.

And lastly, if I should grant that these reflexions did not at first make so deep an impression in his heart, yet at least it cannot be denied, but that after his fall he was in a manner necessitated to meditate on these truths. God appeared to him in a visible manner; God passed sentence upon him, his wife, and the serpent; God condemned the serpent, and afforded his grace to man; God made him a promise proportioned to the evil into which he was fallen. The woman had deceived her husband, which did naturally tend to disunite them; but God uniting himself again with *Adam*, made the effect of his promise to depend upon *Adam's* reunion with his wife, having assured him that the offspring of his wife should be his Redeemer. God threatened the woman with extreme pains in child-bearing; he drove them out of the garden of *Eden*, and placed a flame of fire to guard the entrance there.

All this, without doubt, would never suffer *Adam* slightly to pass over matters of so great importance as his creation, and the manner of his being formed out of the earth. Things being thus stated, it is easy to judge whether we have supposed *Adam* too subtle and contemplative, by attributing the aforesaid reflexions to him.

C H A P. X.

That the CHILDREN of ADAM had reason to be convinced of the Creation.

IT is apparent, that as soon as the children of *Adam* were arrived to years of understanding, they were in a condition to make reflexions on the manner of their production, according to the information received of their parents. They were able to compare the twofold original of man; the one, in which the body was immediately taken from the earth; the other, in which it was produced by generation; and were able to judge if either of them were improbable; and in particular, whether the formation of their parents, with other matters consequent, and depending on it, could be sufficiently proved and confirmed.

For it was easy for them to judge, that their parents, of whose tenderness and care they had so great experience, could not have had the least design to deceive them in what they had delivered to them concerning the creation. They had also leisure enough, during the long lives they enjoyed, to examine the solidity of those reasons which persuaded their parents of the truth of their creation.

For instance, they could easily inform themselves whether there were any more men and women than their father and mother, that had been before them; whether they were produced from the earth, or by a fortuitous concurrence of atoms; whether there were any other language besides that which they spoke; whether there were any ruins of buildings, or other remains, which signified that arts had been formerly cultivated; and in a word, whether there were any reason to persuade them, that the world had not its beginning at the time which their parents assigned for it.

Neither were they only in a condition to judge of the truth of these things: but their senses were able to convince them of it; as, for instance, by seeing the first trees, the production of others from them, and the different degrees of their growth.

But besides all this, they could experience most of these things in their own persons; they could know whether God had assigned to man the fruit of trees, and grain for their food, as *Moses* has recorded, only by examining their own mouths, which were formed to chew fruits, and not to tear the raw flesh of animals, which requires sharper and stronger sets of teeth than those they found themselves provided with, the eating of flesh not being introduced till after the deluge.

Thus, after the act of generation, they saw their children born, as it was represented to them that they themselves had been formed.

They had also before their eyes sensible signs of the truth of the matters related to them: as, for instance, the continual miracle of a flame of fire, which kept them from entering into Paradise, was a certain argument of the first sin, of which they had not been eye-witnesses.

The pains of a woman in child-bearing did the more confirm the truth of the Divine sentence, because it was not obvious for them to apprehend such consequences from an act which was pleasing to their sensual appetites.

And lastly, Forasmuch as they kept a solemn day to celebrate the memory of the world's nativity, on which seventh day their parents repeated to them no less than two and fifty times a year the same thing, informing them of the manner of their formation; it is impossible to suppose that they should let these things pass without making any reflexion on the truth of them, and the rather because we cannot rationally conceive that they should have been serious in any duties of religion, without having first examined the truth of the creation, and of the promise of a Redeemer, which are the true grounds of all religious acts whatsoever.

C H A P. XI.

That the CHILDREN of ADAM were actually convinced of the Truth of the Creation, and the Promise of the MESSIAH.

I SUPPOSE it is sufficiently evident that the immediate posterity of Adam could easily be assured of the manner how their parents had been produced, from whom they derived their beings. They could likewise be fully satisfied about the truth of their sin, and the promise God had made them, *That one of their posterity should destroy the enemy of mankind.*

My business therefore next, is to shew that they were actually assured of the truth of these matters: this will appear, if we consider two things.

The first is, that as these matters were the chief objects of their meditation, because of their extraordinary importance, so it is evident that they acted as persons fully satisfied of the truth of them.

The other is, that as they had been instructed in these truths by their parents, so they delivered the same to their posterity, to whom they transmitted the belief of these matters, as of things altogether unquestionable.

I say then, that they acted as those who were fully assured of the truth of these matters, which appears throughout the whole course of their lives, not only when they did that which was good, but when they were overtaken with sin: and this alone, methinks, is sufficient to evidence the deep impression the belief of the creation, and the promise of the *Messiah*, had made on their hearts.

Sacrifices are acts of religious worship; and this custom therefore of sacrificing, which we find amongst the Children of Adam, was an evident mark of their piety; and this their religious inclination was, without doubt,

doubt, the effect of their being persuaded of the truth of the creation and first promise.

The sin of *Cain* in killing his brother, shews the same persuasion: the Divine oracle, *the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head*, being expressed in very general terms, was applicable either to the first son of *Eve*, or to his posterity; or else to some other who might be called her seed, because born from one of her posterity.

It is natural for us to pass from one meaning to another, when we are in search for the true sense of such *general propositions* as these. Now it appears, from the name which *Eve* gave to *Cain*, that she took the words of this oracle in the first sense, that is, she looked upon *Cain* to be the son that had been promised her, as appears from her own words. *I have* (saith she) *gotten a man from the Lord* (k). And it cannot be doubted, that being in this opinion herself, she was not wanting to cherish and flatter this hope in her son, that he was to fulfil the first prophesy or Divine oracle: neither is it any whit stranger to suppose this, than to imagine that *Mandane* did instil into her son *Cyrus* aspiring thoughts for the empire of *Asia*, from the dream of his father *Astyages*, which she looked upon as a divine foreboding.

When we read therefore that *Cain* slew his brother, seeing him preferred of God by a very distinguishing mark in the act of their sacrificing, through the jealousy and hatred he had conceived against him, may we not very naturally conclude from thence, that as he had never doubted of the truth of the promise, so he could not endure to see another come, to dispute his pretensions of being the fulfiller of that first oracle?

A like reflexion we may make upon the name which *Eve* gave to *Seth*; and indeed the *Jews*, in their ancient commentaries on *Genesis*, lead us to it: *She called his name Seth, for God* (saith she) *has appointed me another seed* (l). *R. Tanchumah*, following the notion of *R. Samuel*, saith, That she had regard to that seed which was to proceed from another, or a strange place; and what seed is that? saith he. It is the King, the *Messiah*.

I pretend not to maintain the solidity of the reflexions they make upon the words, *another seed*. They seem rather to have pleased themselves in sporting with a word which admits of both significations, *other* and *strange*, then to give us an exact and distinct notion of the importance of that word. Thus much, at least, we cannot deny, but that *Eve* considering her son *Seth* as him whom God has given her instead of *Abel*, she could do no less than acquaint him with her hopes; and indeed, this information was that which not only disposed *Seth* and his posterity for piety and the spirit of religion, but did also in a particular manner incline them to separate from the race of *Cain*, as from those whom God had bereft of the right of fulfilling the first oracle, to which naturally they might pretend.

It appears from the example of *Enoch*, that the children of *Adam* lived in the exercise of religious worship: and we know that the said worship supposeth the creation of the world, and promise of the *Messiah*, and that all the acts of religion are employed either in commemorating these truths

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every

(k) Gen. iv. 1.

(l) *Rabbob*, fol. 27. col. 2. par. 23. & *alibi*.

every seventh day, or in unfolding the wonders therein contained, or in testifying our thankfulness to God for the same.

We may add here, that the instance of *Lamech's polygamy* does in some sort make out to us the force of this persuasion.

Cain being rejected by God, and distinguished by an exemplary punishment, for killing his brother *Abel*, it is evident that no man could any longer interpret that promise in the first sense, by applying it to *Adam's* first son, or his posterity. This being so plain, as none could be ignorant of it, it was therefore natural to seek for another meaning of that promise, and to place the fulfilling of it in a posterity at a greater distance, or more numerous.

And indeed so it happened; for the exemplary punishment which God inflicted on *Cain* during the seven first generations, according to those words, *That he should be punished sevenfold*, made his posterity apprehend, that God (for the sin he had committed) had justly debarred him of the right he might otherwise have had of fulfilling the promise.

But yet at the same time they conceived also, that this right, which belonged more properly to the eldest or first-born than to the younger brothers, was now to return to his posterity after the seventh generation; and in this view it seems, that *Lamech* affected polygamy, as if by multiplying his posterity he had hoped to see that promise fulfilled by some one or other of them.

It cannot be denied but that he imitated the crimes of *Cain*, and therefore may well be supposed to have been leavened also with his false maxims. But how greatly soever he was corrupted, yet so far as he had been educated in the hopes of his father, and in converse with the family of *Seth*, who many ages before had formed public assemblies for religious exercises, we cannot well imagine but that he must have had the same pretensions.

It appears therefore that the polygamy of *Lamech* may justly be esteemed an effect of his misapprehensions concerning the sense of the first promise; those means which he conceived most likely, he made choice of, to give him a share in the fulfilling of that promise which pointed at a son to be born. So that the irregularity he was guilty of in marrying two wives at the same time, may pass for a proof of his being persuaded not only of the promise, *That the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head*, but also of the creation of the world.

It seems that, according to these principles, we may give a very plausible account, as well of those violences which were exercised in the old world, and of their strong inclinations to sensuality, as of those alliances between the family of *Seth* and that of *Cain*, which did not happen till seven generations after *Cain*; that is to say, at a time when the family of *Cain* pretended to be restored again to his ancient right, from which he had been suspended during seven generations: the family of *Seth*, by these alliances with the family of *Cain*, seeming desirous to secure their hopes and pretensions. It will not be thought strange that I look upon the jealousy of *Cain* towards his brother (as thinking himself supplanted by him of his right to accomplish the promise), and the polygamy of *Lamech*, as an effect of this persuasion, if it be considered, that in all likelihood this

this belief was more strong at the beginning of the world, the idea of the promise being more fresh and lively in the minds of men, as a thing at no great distance from those times; and that we find in the holy family in general, manifold instances of this spirit of jealousy, and burning desire of a posterity.

We find also, much about the same time, another *Lamech*, the father of *Noah* (*m*), declaring by the name he gave his son, the hopes he had that he might probably be the person who was to comfort mankind concerning all the misery sin had brought into the world.

Thus it appears clearly, that for above sixteen ages, from the creation of the world to the deluge, we find in all the actions of the children of *Adam* a strong impression of the belief of the creation of the world, and the promise of the *Messiah*; and till this time we find not the least instance which might seem to convince the relation of *Moses* of the least absurdity. We see men acting from the persuasion of these two matters of fact; we must conclude therefore, that they were distinctly informed of them: yea, we see all men in general acting according to this persuasion; it is evident therefore they were known to all; and the weekly observance of the sabbath-day continually representing the truths to the eyes and minds of all, takes away all possibility of forgery in these matters.

Let us now inquire whether after the deluge these ideas were effaced; or, whether they have not exerted the same efficacy in the spirit of *Noah*, and the actions of all his posterity.

C H A P. XII.

That NOAH was fully persuaded of the Creation of the World, and the Promise of the MESSIAH.

IF we find that the children of *Adam*, and their posterity, could be exactly informed of the creation, and the promise of the *Messiah*, and that indeed they were so, it will follow, that *Noah* could not be unacquainted with the same truths.

Noah was six hundred years old when the deluge came: he had conversed with *Lamech* his father, who had seen *Adam* and his children, as being fifty-six years of age when *Adam* died; he had conversed with *Methusalem* his grandfather, who died that very year the flood came, and who, being three hundred and forty-three years old when *Adam* died, had without doubt instructed *Noah* during so vast an interval of time, in like manner as himself had been instructed by *Adam* for many ages.

And as *Methusalem* had lived a long time with *Seth*, who died in the year of the world 1042, so it is evident that *Noah*, who was born in the year

year 1056, had not only seen *Lamech* and *Methusalem*, but many also of their ancestors, whose discourses he heard, examined their traditions, and imitated their way of worship.

Moreover, *Noah* saw that there were no men in his time who did not deduce their genealogy from *Adam*: all his contemporaries could convince him of it, every one of them having as exact a knowledge of their ancestors as he could have of his.

Now, that this was a matter which they might be easily assured of, appears on these two accounts: the one is, the long life which the men of that age enjoyed; and the other, the short interval of time which was between the creation and the deluge, the whole amounting only to 1656 years. *Adam* died in the year 930, and the deluge happened in the 600 year of *Noah's* life. *Adam* died 126 years before the birth of *Noah*; so as *Adam* must have been seen and known by *Methusalem*, *Lamech*, and thousands of others who were contemporaries with *Noah*.

To these we may add a third remark, and that is, the jealousy and hatred which was between the two families of *Cain* and *Seth*: *Cain's* posterity were altogether corrupted, and the greatest part of *Seth's* also. *Noah*, being of the posterity of *Seth*, had no reason to call those matters in question, which he saw generally owned and received of those to whom their wickedness and crimes suggested objections against them. And I do not know, whether I might not suppose that *Noah* had before his eyes *Paradise*, with the cherubims who guarded the entrance thereof, and made it inaccessible; which, if so, was an authentic proof of the truths in question; that garden, as far as we can judge, being not destroyed, nor the guardian angel discharged, till the time of the flood.

Be it as it will, yet *Noah*, being a man fearing God, was honoured with an extraordinary call to exhort men to repentance; he was commanded to build an ark; he saw the deluge happening, according to what God had foretold; he saw the beasts, of their own accord, gather themselves together, to enter into the ark, in like manner as he had been told that they came to *Adam*; he saw the deluge cease, according to the Divine declaration; he saw fire from heaven consuming the sacrifice he offered in acknowledgment to God, in like manner as the words of *Moses* seem to imply that it happened at the sacrifice of *Abel*; he saw himself chosen in a peculiar manner to be the depositary of the promise which *Adam* had left to his posterity, though he never had the satisfaction of seeing it fulfilled himself, God having reserved the accomplishment of it for another time, and to one of his posterity at a great distance.

It is very evident that all these particulars could not but conduce to preserve the memory of these first most important matters of fact of the creation and the promise of the *Messiah*; and therefore, that *Noah* must of necessity be convinced of the certainty and truth of them. Let us now see whether *Noah's* offspring had the same persuasion concerning these things.

C H A P. XIII.

That the Children of NOAH were convinced of the Truth of these Matters.

THE children of *Noah* were an hundred years old when the deluge happened, and consequently had conversed a long space of time with *Methusalem*, and many other of their ancestors and relations of the old world, and had frequented the religious assemblies, observed every sabbath-day in the family of *Seth*, whence they were descended, and had been instructed there by those who had seen *Adam* and his posterity: it is evident therefore, beyond all contest, that they could not be ignorant of the creation, and promise of the *Messiah*.

Now, that they had a distinct knowledge of those matters, we may evidently conclude, not only because they had seen God, when he blessed them, and a second time said to them, as after a new creation, *Increase and multiply* (*n*); nor only upon the account of his giving them a positive law, forbidding them to eat the blood of living creatures (*o*), whose flesh they were permitted to feed on, as he had forbid *Adam* to eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden, when he left the rest to their free use: not only for that he had given the rainbow, as a new sign of his covenant with mankind; nor only because they had practised those acts of religion to which they had been educated by their parents and ancestors before the deluge: but because the same may be inferred from that action which drew upon *Cham* his father's curse.

What is the meaning of *Cham*'s deriding the nakedness of his father, and of his father's taking occasion from thence to curse him so solemnly, and that in the person of *Canaan* his first-born? If it were only a piece of irreverence in the father, what reason had *Noah* to curse the son on that account? Or was it (as some have supposed) that *Canaan* had given occasion first to his father's irreverence, by acquainting him with the disorder in which he had found his grandfather *Noah*? Without doubt, there is something more than ordinary in this history. Sure it is, that the account given us of *Cham* represents him as a profane person, and deeply tinctured with the maxims of *Cain* and his posterity, and seems to hint to us, that he supposing the promise of the *Messiah* either frustrated by the death of *Abel*, or altogether false, he made his father's nakedness the subject of his mockery; who seemed to be incapable of begetting any more children, and therefore incapable of contributing to the accomplishment of the promise of the *Messiah*, in hopes of which he accounted himself so happy that he had escaped the deluge.

What means it also, that *Noah* pronounced so terrible a curse against the posterity of *Cham* by *Canaan*, who were so far from giving an accomplishment to that promise, that they were in a manner wholly exterminated by *Joshua*, when God put the posterity of *Shem* by *Abraham* in possession of the land of *Canaan*? It is very natural for us to conceive, that

(*n*) Gen. ix. 1.

(*o*) Gen. ix. 5.

That *Noah* considered his son *Cham*'s deriding of him, not only as contrary to the respect which was due to him as his father, but also as the effect of a horrid impiety, which attacked God himself, as making that promise, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head*, a subject of raillery.

This reflexion upon the action of *Cham*, and the curse of *Noah* consequent to it, does appear very natural, if we consider that *Noah* could not but reflect upon the name his father had given him, and the special favour shewed to him, in being alone preserved of all the posterity of *Adam*, and consequently the only person in the world by whom this promise was to be fulfilled. At least, it cannot be denied, but that this reflexion is as natural as it would have been just, in reference to the fact of cruel *Ashages* (*p*), if, when he had (as he thought) sufficiently eluded his dream, which presaged the glory of the son of *Mandane* his daughter, he had found her indecently uncovered, and had taken thence occasion deridingly to reflect, with his other children, upon a dream which seemed to promise to the son of *Mandane* the throne of all *Asia*, and threaten the ruin of his own.

It is a thing worth our noting, that in the time of *Ezra* (*q*) the *Samaritans* had so fresh a memory of *Cham*'s sin, which they supposed to be generally preserved amongst other nations, that in their letter to king *Artaxerxes* against the *Jews* who rebuilt *Jerusalem*, they declare, they would not discover the king's nakedness; implying, that they could not consent to the injury he might receive from the *Jews* in suffering *Jerusalem* to be rebuilt. It is not needful to repeat those other arguments which prove that the children of *Noah* had reason to be, and were actually as much convinced of the creation and first promise as their ancestors were; for, seeing that these arguments were the very same which their fathers had to persuade themselves of the truth of these things, we had better proceed to the inquiry, whether their posterity that followed them, had the same persuasion they had? which may easily be proved, in making some reflexions on the following ages, and upon those who descended from *Noah* and his children.

C H A P. XIV.

That the Posterity of NOAH's Children were persuaded of the Truth of the Creation, and first Promise.

IF *Noah* saw *Methusalem*, who had seen *Adam* and his posterity before the deluge; *Abraham* saw *Shem* and his children, who were unquestionable witnesses of what had passed before and since the flood.

Noah

(*p*) *Herod*, lib. 1. *Justin Hist.* lib. 1. *Valer. Max.* lib. 1.

(*q*) *Ezra* iv. 14.

Noah dying 350 years after the deluge, it appears that his death happened in the year of the world 2006; so that *Noah* died only two years before the birth of *Abraham*, he being born in the year 2008.

Abraham lived 150 years with *Shem*, who died in the year 2158; and 88 years with *Arphaxad* the son of *Shem*, who died in the year 2096; he lived 118 years with *Selah* son of *Arphaxad*, who died in the year 2126, and 179 years with *Heber* the son of *Selah*, who died in the year 2187.

Isaac being born in the year 2108, might see *Shem*, *Selah*, and *Heber*, who for some hundreds of years had conversed with *Noah* and his other children; I say, we may suppose him to have conversed with those patriarchs, or at least with those who, being their contemporaries, discoursed of *Noah* as a man but of yesterday, and from his relation and his children's were informed of the creation of *Adam*, his fall, the promise of the holy seed, the death of *Abel*, the miracle of Paradise, the preaching of *Noah*, the deluge, &c. and who, in obedience to the law of God, observed by their ancestors, did meet together fifty-two times every year, to celebrate the memorial of these wonders, and to teach them to their posterity.

We may take notice of three things here which conduce much to the preservation of a distinct knowledge of these matters.

The first is, That the ark itself might be seen by all the world, as a certain monument of the deluge, and the saving of *Noah* and his sons (r). This monument continued very many ages after *Abraham*, and was a means to preserve the memory of the deluge amongst the Pagans, as *Lucian*, to name no more, acquaints us.

The second is, That it was as easy for any of *Abraham*'s contemporaries, as for *Abraham*, to deduce his genealogy from *Noah* and his children.

And this was the more easy, because the first division of the world among the three sons of *Noah*, was followed by another partition amongst their posterity, in the year of the world 1758; a division which gave them a just title of possession to that part of the earth where they were seated; in defence of which, it seems probable that the war of *Chedorlaomer* (mentioned the xiiiith of *Genesis*) was undertaken, the family of *Cham* having invaded the land of *Canaan*, which was part of the inheritance of *Shem*, as we shall make appear elsewhere.

The third and last thing is, That it was not easy to impose a forgery upon those times, because their lives were yet of a great extent, though inferior to those who lived before the flood.

To these we may add this further consideration, that as the jealousy which was between the family of *Seth* and *Cain* was a great means to preserve inviolably the important truths of the creation and first promise; a like jealousy now being risen amongst the sons of *Noah*, *Cham* being accursed of his own father in the person of *Canaan*, and the same being propagated to their posterity, it could not but effectually contribute to rescue these important truths from oblivion, and particularly the promise of the *Messiah*, conceived in these words, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head*.

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In a word, we may not only, in reference to the matter in hand, take notice of what *Lucian* relates concerning the religion of the *Assyrians* (1), which did so lively preserve the memory of the deluge, and of what was done to *Noah* by his son *Cham*, when he scoffed at the nakedness of his father (2); but also, that the God of the *Sichemites* was called *Baalberith*, whose symbol was the figure of the privy parts of a man, which seems a manifest allusion to their descent from the family of *Cham*, the *Sichemites* being some of the posterity of *Canaan*.

It is also very natural to conceive, first of all, that it was from those old pretensions that the *Canaanites* took occasion to profane the most holy things with such shameful ideas.

Secondly, That it was in detestation of these ideas, that God ordered the killing of the priests of *Baal*. And,

Thirdly, That it was for the same reason, that the *Jews* were commanded to destroy them utterly.

Fourthly, This was also the reason why the *Israelites* were so often desirous of imitating their crimes.

In the fifth place, as we see that upon the like account the *Moabites* and *Ammonites* took *Chemosh* for their god, and that the women of those nations were very zealous to propagate their religion, of which we have an instance in *Jezabel*, the wife of *Ahab*, so God was also willing to inspire his people with horror and detestation for their religion or any alliance with them.

Lastly, as there does appear a very great conformity and resemblance between the first birth of the world from the first chaos, and its being born again after the deluge; between *Adam* the first man, and *Noah* the second; and between the jealousies sprung up in both their families upon the account of the promise of the *Messiah*; so this conformity could not but very naturally contribute to preserve the memory of those ancient events which *Noah* and his children had delivered to their posterity with all the care which is taken to preserve the tradition of the fundamentals of religion.

C H A P. XV.

That we find the Family of ABRAHAM, and his Posterity till JACOB, fully persuaded of those Truths.

IT is no less easy to conceive how the distinct knowledge of these truths was in process of time handed down to *Jacob* and his posterity. This I shall briefly explain.

(1) *Judg.* viii. 23. & ix. 8. *Talm. Hier.* fol. 11. col. 4. & *gloss.* in *b. b.* & *Avodazara*, c. iii. fol. 43. col. 1.

(2) *De Dea Syr.* p. 1069.

I need not take notice here, that the religion practised by *Abraham* and his posterity, suppose those matters as constantly owned and known.

It cannot be denied, but that *Lot*, having followed *Terah* and *Abraham* when God called the latter out of *Chaldea*, might thence suppose, that this heavenly call did separate and distinguish him from the rest of the posterity of *Shem*, and gave him a right, as well as *Abraham*, to pretend to the privilege of fulfilling the promise of the *Messiah*, or at least to see it fulfilled in his posterity. This we may infer from the incest of *Lot's* daughters: their crime, which in another view appears very monstrous, doth clearly prove, that they were strongly possessed with this hope, which their father had raised in them.

I know that some interpreters suppose (*u*), that they were moved to commit this incest from a pious intention of preserving mankind, as imagining to themselves, that as the deluge had drowned all men, besides *Noah* and his family, so the flames which destroyed *Sodom* had consumed all mankind; which they were the more ready to believe, because they might have heard from their father, that the world one day was to perish by fire. But indeed it may be considered as proceeding from a very different motive, the *Jewish* doctors (*x*) plainly averring, that this was done by them in hopes of bringing forth the promised Redeemer.

And if we look upon this action of theirs in this view, with reference to the promise of the *Messiah*, which was the grand object of the hopes of all those that feared God; it is natural to conceive, that considering their father as one whom God had peculiarly chosen from among the posterity of *Shem*, to execute the promise of the *Messiah*, and seeing that their mother was changed into a statue of salt, they conceived themselves in some sort authorised to surprise their father in that manner; and the rather, because they conceived on the one hand, that none of the *Canaanites* (upon whom God had now begun to pour forth so hideous a vengeance, as a beginning of the execution of the curse against *Cham*) having any part in this chiefest of blessings, could ever marry them, after that God had so manifestly separated and called forth their father from amongst them; and on the other hand, supposing that God would dispense with the irregularity of this action, by reason of their being reduced to an extremity.

There be three circumstances which greatly confirm this my remark upon the motive of their incest.

The first is, That they are represented to us as those who had behaved themselves very chastely, in the midst of the impurities of *Sodom*; and that besides we find they designed no such thing, till after the death of their mother.

The other is, That we see them contriving the thing together, and that in a matter which naturally is apt to separate the greatest friends, where the motive proceeds from a spirit of uncleanness; nor indeed do we find that they continued in this incest.

The third is, That they were so far from being ashamed of an action in itself so criminal, or concealing the knowledge of it from posterity, that they gave those names to the children born of this their incest, that

might

(*u*) *Lyra* in *Genes.* xix.

(*x*) *Beresh. Rab.* part 23.

might perpetuate and divulge the memory of this their action, the one calling her son *Moab*, as much as to say, *born of my father*, and the other her's *Benammi*, a name of a like signification with the former.

This observation is very necessary, because these two sons became the heads of two great people, the *Moabites* and the *Ammonites*, whose kingdoms lasted above 1300 years, and lived on the borders of the holy land, and were jealous of *Abraham* and his posterity, as pretending that *Abraham* could not be chosen before *Lot* their father, who, being the son of *Abraham's* eldest brother, was to be considered as the first-born of *Terah*, and who were apt, without doubt, to take it for granted, that if God had brought *Abraham* out of *Chaldea*, and rescued him from *Ur*, he had in a more peculiar manner saved *Lot* alone from the conflagration of *Sodom*, by the ministry of angels; and that *Abraham* and *Lot* being equally descended from *Terah*, the right of accomplishing the promise did equally belong to them.

And indeed we find that in all succeeding times these thoughts did predominate with them, as may easily be made out from the history of *Balaam*.

We see therefore, that the *Moabites*, who were descended from the eldest daughter of *Lot*, looked upon the pretensions of the *Israelites*, that the *Messiah* was to be born of their seed, in exclusion to all others, with great impatience; and it was for this reason that they sent for *Balaam*, to decide (by Divine authority) the difference between them, concerning the right or the promised blessing.

We may make very near the same reflexions upon the calling of *Ruth* the *Moabite*, when she saith to *Naomi* her mother-in-law, *Thy God shall be my God, and thy people shall be my people*; which signifies a renouncing of the pretensions of her own people, and an acquiescing in the justice of those of the *Israelites*; and it was upon this occasion, that *Ruth* is more particularly taken notice of in the genealogy of our Saviour, as I shall have occasion to shew hereafter.

That which I have hinted concerning the intention and aim of the daughters of *Lot*, hath been observed before by the *Jewish* Rabbins, as we may see in the most ancient of their Commentaries upon these words of *Genesis*, chap. xix. v. 32. *Come, let us make our father drink wine, &c.* Upon which words, *R. Tanchumah*, following the footsteps of *R. Samuel*, makes this reflexion: *That we may preserve seed of our father*; it is not said, that we may preserve a son from our father, but that we may renew the posterity of our father, because (saith he) they had regard to the seed which was to proceed from a strange place; and what seed is that? It is the King *Messiah*.

After this observation upon this action of *Lot's* daughters, it can no longer rationally be doubted, but that the violent passion which *Sarah* had for a son, proceeded from the very same impresson which made her, contrary to the inclinations of that sex, to deliver her servant into her husband's bosom, especially if we join to this the particular promise God had made to *Abraham*, which she could not be ignorant of.

Sarah sees herself destitute of children; and her barrenness having continued so long a time, she had no hopes of ever being a mother: what

remained therefore for her, but to think of adopting a son of her bond-woman? And in consideration of this, she persuades her husband, who had no inclination to any such thing by any thing that appears (at least precedent to this desire of his wife), to take her unto him. *He sought the seed of God*, that is, the seed which God had promised, as *Malachi* expresses it, *Mal. ii. 15.*

At least it is certain, that the *Jews* have taken these words of *Malachi* (x) in this sense for a very long time, as they do still to this day.

We may easily perceive, that this was a predominant impression throughout that whole family, if, to what we have already observed of *Lot's* daughters and of *Sarah*, we do but add the sorrow *Rebecca* conceived because of her barrenness, and the contentions happening between the wives of *Jacob* for their husband's company; without which supposal, the relation of such a matter would be a thing of no importance.

Certainly, as it would be ridiculous to suppose that so wise an historian as *Moses* was, should stoop to the recital of such mean and low particulars (not to speak worse of them) without aiming at something very high and considerable, so it is rational to believe that in all these relations he pointed at the promise of the *Messiah*, which at that time was the great object of the religion of the faithful, which God in process of time did explain by little and little more distinctly.

The jealousy also which arose between *Ishmael* and *Isaac*, is no less considerable. *Ishmael* was the eldest son of *Abraham*, and circumcised as well as *Isaac*; he was saved from death by the ministry of an angel; and was the head of a great people, who from that time to this very day have always been circumcised.

It may be also of great use to take notice here, that *Ishmael* could not but be instructed by *Abraham* concerning the promise God had made to him, to which he pretended, as being the elder, and therefore mocked at the great stir was made at the weaning of *Isaac*, as thinking that he, being the eldest, could not be deprived of the natural right of his primogeniture. At least, it is very probable, that except it had been thus, *Sarah's* anger (approved by God himself) would not have proved so violent, as well against *Ishmael* as *Hagar*, who flattered him in these pretensions, nor would *Abraham* so far have complied with it.

And forasmuch as *Isaac*, on the other side, was born to fulfil a particular promise, was circumcised, and saved from death by an angel; and that, besides all this, *Ishmael* and he had been equally educated in the practice of religion; it is impossible but that this conformity of events (which has been the cause of such lasting contests between them and their posterity) must have engaged them to inquire into the truth of the creation, and the promise of the *Messiah*, and into all other matters which did any way concern them.

We have a like instance, if not stronger for our purpose, in *Esau* and *Jacob*, who were both born of the same mother; but *Esau* being the first-born, we find the same jealousy arising between them, as before between

(x) *Targ. Jonath.* in h. l. & *Kimchi* in h. l.

between *Ishmael* and *Isaac*. *Sarah* seemed somewhat cruel in casting out her adopted son *Ishmael*; and here we see that *Rebecca* preferred *Jacob* before *Esau* her first-born, and assisted him in robbing his elder brother of the blessing due to him of right: but without question, her design in all this was to entail this blessing on her family, by making it fall on *Jacob*, as being afraid (and that not without cause) that *Esau*, by his sins and his marriage with the *Canaanites*, had made himself incapable thereof.

Now as this was the occasion of a great dispute between these two Patriarchs educated in the same belief and religion, so it plainly shews us how strong a persuasion they had of the creation, and the promise of the *Messiah*.

And besides, it is further very remarkable,

First, That *Moses* represents *Esau* as a profane person; for which, not only this reason may be alledged, that he sold his birth-right for a mess of pottage, to which birth-right the priesthood was always annexed; but we must further take notice,

That he being educated by his father in the hopes of this blessing, he seemed to laugh at it in all his actions; for first he married the daughter of *Heth*, by which he sufficiently intimated that he neither minded the blessing nor the curse of God; for *Canaan* and his posterity had in a very solemn manner been cursed by *Noah*, with a particular regard to the promise of the *Messiah*, as I hinted before.

In the second place, he married a daughter of *Ishmael*, as if he intended to renew the pretensions of *Ishmael* against *Isaac* his father.

In the third place we see, that when he repented of this profane humour, he was pierced with extreme sorrow for the crime he had committed, because he could not obtain pardon for it.

This jealousy and difference between *Esau* and *Jacob*, is the more considerable, because *Esau* was the head of a great nation, viz. the *Edomites*, a people circumcised as well as the *Jews*, jealous of the posterity of *Jacob*, and living upon the borders of *Judea*, as well as the *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, and *Ishmaelites*, but yet put by their hopes by that oracle, *The greater people shall serve the lesser*.

Were it needful to afford a greater light to these reflexions, I might here add a very natural one, from the oath which *Abraham* made his servant *Eliezer* take, when he sent him to *Padan-Aram*, to procure a wife for *Isaac*. We may easily judge that he was not willing he should marry a *Canaanite*, as *Lot* had done; and that, for fear of forfeiting his hopes, and weakening the just pretensions of *Isaac* to the right of accomplishing the promise, from whence the *Canaanites* were excluded by the prophecy delivered by *Noah*. But that which made *Abraham* to oblige his servant to swear, putting his hand under his thigh; that is, touching that part which was the subject of circumcision (*y*), and which bore the mark of the covenant; deserves a further consideration.

We find first of all, that the Patriarch *Jacob* observes the same custom, when he made his son *Joseph* to take an oath, that he should bury him in *Egypt*.

Secondly, We find that this custom of beholding that member which

received circumcision, as a part consecrated to religion, did by little and little take place in the land of *Canaan*, and gave occasion to the worship of *Baal Peor*, so famous among the *Moabites* and *Ammonites*; a very surprising and strange worship indeed, and yet celebrated with festivals and hymns, and was the rise of that worship which the heathens afterwards gave to *Priapus*. What I have here observed, hath been in part acknowledged by the *Jews*, where they speak of the worship of *Baal Peor*, and the reason which made God prescribe to the priest the use of linen drawers, that their nakedness might not appear during the functions of their ministry.

After all that I have now said, concerning those jealousies which *Moses* relates with so much care, it seems that the solidity of these observations cannot be disputed; especially if we consider, that it is these jealousies, and these pretensions to the promise of the *Messiah*, that gave rise to the custom of calling God, the God of *Abraham*, the God of *Isaac*, and the God of *Jacob*: for though he might as well have been called the God of *Adam*, the God of *Enoch*, and the God of *Noah*, forasmuch as all these Patriarchs were also depositaries of the promise of the *Messiah*; yet it is probable that God was called so, because of the particular promises which had been made, first to *Abraham*, secondly to *Isaac*, and lastly to *Jacob*, and in opposition to the pretensions of some people near neighbours to the *Israelites*, and jealous of their hopes: the God of *Abraham*, and not of *Lot*, as the *Ammonites* and *Moabites*, *Lot's* posterity, pretended; the God of *Isaac*, and not of *Ishmael*, as the *Ishmaelites* pretended; the God of *Jacob*, and not of *Esau*, as the *Edomites*, who were the offspring of *Esau*, pretended.

C H A P. XVI.

That this very Persuasion seems to have been kept up amongst the Posterity of
JACOB, until MOSES's Time.

IT is yet easier to shew, that the distinct knowledge of the creation, and of the promise of the *Messiah*, did continue from *Jacob* to *Joseph*, and so on to *Moses*.

The following arguments will clearly demonstrate it.

First of all, we see that *Jacob* (x) being possessed of the blessing, and depositary of the promise, obeyed *Isaac's* command, who forbade him to take a wife, but out of his own family; and that accordingly he went to *Padan-Aram*, to seek and get a wife amongst those of his kindred, as *Abraham* had formerly sent for one of the same country for his son *Isaac*.

We see, in the second place, this Patriarch imitated *Lamech* (a) in some respect, by his falling into polygamy: for who can doubt but he who was conscious to himself of having surprised, as he thought, the blessing

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(x) Genes. xxviii.

(a) Genes. xxix.

designed

designed for his elder brother, did act in this occasion by the same principle which *Lamech* had formerly acted by? Thus we see that barren *Rachel* follows *Sarah's* example, and adopts the son of that maid-servant whom she gave to *Jacob*; wherein *Leah* followed her, and gave one of her maids to her husband: all this was evidently grounded upon the same principle which afterwards bred those dissensions betwixt *Jacob's* wives about the getting children by him; for it is very natural to believe, that *Jacob* did not conceal from his wives his advantages and hopes.

It appears that *Jacob's* children, which were born, for the most part, in *Laban's* house in *Chaldea*, where they had seen *Abraham's* native country, and those of their own kindred, from among whom God had commanded *Abraham* to depart, and to go into *Canaan*, did entertain very lively notions of those important truths, especially after they were strengthened and confirmed by the cares and instructions of old *Isaac*, to whom they were brought by *Jacob*; and after they began to practise in *Canaan* the worship and religion of their own family, and to compare it with the doctrine they had learnt in *Chaldea*.

Those several voyages which God obliged the Patriarchs to undertake, as that of *Abraham* out of *Ur of Chaldea*, that of *Jacob* out of *Canaan*, (we ought to make the same judgment of *Moses's* forty years sojourning amongst the *Midianites*) did evidently oblige them to examine more carefully what was the tradition received in the several countries into which they travelled, and so to imprint the more deeply into their minds the belief of those important truths which were the foundation of their religion, and the sole object of the meditations of the faithful.

One sees, in short, the effects of these impressions,

1. By that custom which seems to have begun in *Jacob's* time, and which afterwards got the authority of a law; I mean, the custom of taking to wife one's own brother's widow, to raise him up seed.

2. The sin of *Onan* is represented so odious, only because by it he acted against the belief of the promise.

3. We see the same thing in the action of *Thamar*, *Judah's* daughter-in-law; for having been deceived by *Judah*, she, in exchange, surprised him into an incest, the commission whereof, according to the observation of a Greek commentator (b), she sought to perpetuate, only because she had a vehement desire to get children out of a family which she looked upon as solely intrusted with the promise of the *Messiah*, and out of which he was accordingly to be born.

It is necessary to make that observation, because we ought always to remember that she was formerly a *Canaanite*, and that consequently she left off and renounced the impiety and idolatry of her kindred, when she embraced the religion and hopes of *Jacob's* family. Therefore we see that particular mention is made of her in our Saviour's genealogy, and of *Ruth*, who likewise gave over all the pretensions of her own people, and so forsook her religion to enter into the tribe of *Judah*, as well as of *Bathsheba*, who was wife to a *Hittite*; whereupon an ancient father hath very well observed (c), according to the *Jewish* opinion, that *Shimon's*

revilings

(b) *Theoph.* in *Mat.* c. i.

(c) *S. Hieronym.* in *Tradit. Heb.* ad 1. *Reg.* 3.

revilings against *David*, when he went out of *Jerusalem*, during *Abraham's* rebellion, reflected upon his birth out of the posterity of *Ruth the Moabitess*, as the *Jews* even to this very day do understand it.

We may make the same reflexion upon the consideration of that implacable jealousy which *Joseph's* dreams raised in the minds of his brethren.

1. We may reasonably conceive, that he being the first-born of *Rachel*, and the wife which *Jacob* his father had first made love to, he had been brought up with hopes of the birth-right, as well as *Isaac*, who was but the second son of *Abraham*.

But, 2. He might besides very well suppose, that the crimes of his brethren born of *Leah* (whom in all likelihood he looked upon as the sole legitimate heirs, the others being born of maid-servants) did rank them with *Esau*, whom God had rejected. That outrageous fury which *Joseph's* brethren shewed against him, because they looked upon him as preferred of God by those dreams to those that were born before him, is so like that of *Cain*, of *Lot*, of *Ishmael*, and of *Esau*, that it had, in all probability, the same cause and original.

Do we not see afterwards another effect of the same jealousy in the affectation that *Jacob* and his family shewed in the land of *Egypt*, when they refused to live promiscuously with the *Egyptians*, which were the posterity of *Ham*, and begged of them a country where they might live by themselves; as we see, on the contrary, the *Egyptians* shewing an extreme aversion against *Jacob* and his family, which was of *Shem's* posterity?

Certainly it cannot be denied, that as this separation was an effect of the antipathy of those nations, so it might also be in some respect the consequence of *Jacob* and his children's pretensions upon the promise of the *Messiah*, the execution and accomplishment whereof they stood up for as belonging to themselves.

To all this we may add, that the persecution of the *Egyptians* against the *Israelites* obliged them to make particular reflexions upon the promise which *Jacob* on his death-bed made to them from God: that persecution was chiefly intended against the male children, *Pharaoh* commanding the extirpation of them, because he was afraid of the *Jews* growing too strong for him, and of their joining with his enemies; and perhaps also, because the *Jews* entertaining a certain expectation of the *Messiah's* coming, and so boasting and glorying of it upon all occasions, the *Egyptians* designed to frustrate and cut off their hope thus, by hindering the accomplishment of the promise.

However, there was no real difficulty to keep up the distinct remembrance of those important facts. *Jacob* died in the year of the world 2315; *Joseph* died in the year of the world 2428. There are then but 58 years between *Joseph's* death and *Moses's* birth: *Moses* might have seen not only *Amram* his own father, who had seen *Levi*, but also *Kobath* his grandfather, who had seen *Jacob*.

And it is for that reason that *Moses* seems to have observed, that *Joseph* saw his own children's children (*d*); that is to say, the third generation,

One cannot imagine any circumstances more conducive than these, to the preserving the distinct knowledge of those important truths which were the foundations of religion,

C H A P. XVII.

That the Tradition which gives us an account of the Persuasion which the Ancients had of the Truth of the Creation of the World, and of the Promise of the MESSIAH, before MOSES, cannot be suspected.

I HAVE shewed, I think, evidently enough, that both the Creation, and the Promise of the *Messiah*, with all the other things depending upon them, might have been known certainly by *Adam* and his children, and so afterwards be handed down to all his posterity till *Moses*'s time.

From *Adam* to *Noah* there is but one man, viz. *Methuselah*, who joined hands with both.

From *Noah* to *Abraham* there is but one man, viz. *Shem*, who saw them both for a considerable time.

From *Abraham* to *Joseph* there is but one man, viz. *Isaac*, *Joseph*'s grandfather.

From *Joseph* to *Moses* there is but one man, viz. *Amram*, who might have seen *Joseph* long enough.

Those characters of time which *Moses* hath so carefully observed, do plainly evidence that the creation, and the promise of the *Messiah*, might be distinctly known: for if we suppose a continued succession of *Adam*'s offspring, it was not easy to impose upon men in that matter; and that, because every one of those who were contemporaries with *Moses*, being able to run up his own pedigree as far as the flood, nay, even up to *Adam*, by as compendious a way as *Moses* could do his own, they would have treated those with the utmost degree of scorn, who should have attempted to forge any thing contrary to what was publicly and universally known; and so it was equally impossible, that the truth of things so important as the creation and the promise of the *Messiah* were, should be unknown.

Besides, I think I have plainly shewed, that many actions recorded by *Moses*, though very strange in themselves, and which the *Atheists* look upon as absurd and ridiculous, have proceeded from no other principle than from the strong persuasion of the truth of those facts, according as, in a long series of ages, every one of the ancients, following his own humour and prejudices, framed to himself a particular idea differing from the true sense of the promise of the *Messiah*.

It cannot reasonably be objected, that all this is only grounded upon the uncertain authority of tradition; for though I grant that tradition, as to facts of another nature, be dubious and uncertain, and not to be

too much relied upon in matter of belief, yet this hath such very particular characters as keep up its own authority.

First, it supposeth a small number of persons from *Adam* to *Moses*, who put it in writing.

Secondly, it supposeth, that those who have preserved this tradition, lived very long, and for the most part for many centuries of years.

Thirdly, it relates to such facts as every one is desirous to be rightly informed of, and which he is particularly concerned to examine, as relating to his own private interest, because they are the principles of his actions, and the rules of his conduct both in civil and religious matters.

Fourthly, it supposeth such real marks as served to keep it up; such as, the pains of child-bearing, the paradise before the flood, the duration of the ark after the flood.

Fifthly, it supposeth a public service and worship, whose celebration is repeated fifty-two times a year, that the remembrance of it should be preserved by all posterity.

Sixthly, it was preserved entire by passing from father to son; and we know that fathers or mothers do not naturally engage in a design of deceiving their children.

Seventhly, it supposeth strange controversies betwixt brothers, the elder having almost been excluded, and the younger, as *Abel*, *Seth*, *Abraham*, *Isaac*, *Jacob*, *Judah*, chosen to accomplish the promise of the *Messiah*, which bred great jealousies, and tended much to preserve those ideas of the truth.

Lastly, it supposeth great contests betwixt whole nations, who all strove one with another for the advantage of being the heirs of the promise, and depositaries of those verities; as the *Moabites*, for instance, the *Ammonites*, the *Ishmaelites*, the *Edomites*, and the *Jews*: each of them pretending to a preference before the others, by God himself, and so making it a matter of credit and honour to themselves. All these characters contribute to the distinct preservation of the knowledge of any truth.

C H A P. XVIII.

An Explication of *MOSES'S Way of Writing*; where it is shewed, that in writing the Book of *GENESIS* he mentioned nothing but what was then generally known.

THIS is a truth which at first I took for granted, and afterwards proved it, the reasons whereof I explained particularly as I went on. But it ought to be fixed as solidly as the matter will bear, because it often happens, that those who do not foresee the consequences which may be drawn from the contrary opinion, do contradict it before they are aware of it; and that too, under pretence of exalting the Divine authority.

authority of the book of *Genesis*: which gives occasion to the Atheists to look upon it no otherwise than as learned men do on the greatest part of legends.

The prophetic spirit acts in two manners.

The first is, by way of revelation, in respect of those things the prophet hath no knowledge of. Thus the Evangelist St. *John* had foretold those events which we read of in the *Revelations*: for those events being all hidden under the shadows of futurity, it was impossible for him to have foretold them, unless the spirit of God had immediately revealed them to him.

The second is, by way of direction, in respect of those things which the Prophet was himself acquainted, either because he was an eye-witness of them himself, or because he learnt them from those who were so.

Now this direction of the spirit consists in the guiding the Prophet so as that he may write of his subject, just as it was either spoken or done. Thus the Evangelists St. *Matthew* and St. *John* drew up an abridgement of those sermons of our Saviour which they had heard, and of those miracles which they had seen.

And thus St. *Luke* and St. *Mark* have written of those things which they had heard from those that were eye-witnesses of them, as St. *Luke* particularly tells us.

Now I affirm, that when *Moses* wrote the book of *Genesis*, he had only the second sort of prophetic influences, and not the first; although in our disputes against Atheists, to convince them by arguments from matters of fact, we may consider him only as an historian, who might have written his book without any other particular direction, and might have preserved it in the memory of those ancient events which were then generally known.

Now, what side soever Divines may take in their disputes against the Atheists, I may easily establish my assertion: first, because it is not necessary to suppose an entire revelation, where tradition being distinct enough, is sufficient to preserve a clear remembrance of all those facts.

Now it cannot be denied, but that the tradition concerning the creation and the promise of the Messiah was of this nature, especially if we consider the little extent of it, and the immediate succession of *Moses*'s ancestors, down to himself.

Secondly, if *Abraham*'s and *Jacob*'s travels through so many places were, as I have observed already, very useful to give them a further view of the common belief of all the several nations descended from *Noah*, and of their agreement in this tradition, it were unjust to suppose that *Moses*'s forty years sojourning in the country of *Midian*, and that too when he was forty years old, and consequently had that ripeness of age and judgment as is fittest for such observations, did not serve to acquaint him with the several passages he records of *Abraham*, as well as of the several divisions of his posterity.

Thirdly, we may observe in the book of *Genesis* a way of writing very different from that which we see in the greatest part of *Exodus*, and in the following books; for whereas God speaks to him in those latter books, which he always did *viva voce*. (And the Jews have wisely observed,

observed, that herein consisted *Moses's* advantage above the other Prophets, to whom God was used to speak only in dreams and visions.) He uses commonly those words, *And the Lord spake unto me.* He marks out the place where God spoke to him, as well as the time and occasion of God's speaking to him, which he does not in his book of *Genesis*.

Fourthly, the book of *Genesis* is not divided into several revelations, as all prophecies are, wherein the several returns of the holy Spirit of God are all exactly set down; which was absolutely necessary, not only to ease the reader, who might be tired if he was to carry a long series of predictions in his mind at once, as if it were only one single vision or revelation, but also to condescend to the nature of the minds of men: for, according to the rules of probability, we cannot suppose them to be filled with so many differing ideas at the same time, but a great confusion must necessarily follow.

But supposing that these observations should be thought insufficient, yet those that follow will seem capable of convincing the minds of all. There are in the book of *Genesis* certain characters of its being written in that way which I speak of. First, one needs only just look into that book, and he will see that the ancientest facts, which are those of which we most desire a particular account, are there described in a very short and concise manner. The history of 1656 years is all contained in eight chapters; there are no actions described therein with more circumstances than only some few of the most important, the remembrance whereof was still fresh amongst them. The history of *Lamech's* polygamy, and the murders of which he was guilty, is there set down so compendiously, that it is very obscure.

Secondly, one sees that he speaks more copiously of all that had been transacted near his time: he explains and mentions all the particulars and circumstances thereof. He speaks so shortly of *Melchisedech*, that it is doubted to this day whether he was not the Patriarch *Shem*, or some other faithful worshipper of the true God settled in the land of *Canaan*; whereas he sets down at length all the particulars of the history of *Abraham*, of *Isaac*, and of *Jacob*, whose last oracles, which he spoke on his death-bed, he carefully records.

Thirdly, he describes with the same exactness all the genealogies of the *Edomites*, their several tribes, and the names of their heads and captains, &c. as when he speaks of those of the people of *Israel*, which indeed he could easily do, having lived forty years of his life amongst those nations, as well as he had other forty years amongst the *Israelites*.

Those who maintain the contrary opinion, must of necessity suppose, first, That tradition is of no use at all to preserve the idea of any illustrious action.

Secondly, That in *Moses's* time there were none who knew any particulars of the history of the flood, &c. of the tower of *Babel*, of the division of tongues; though we see plainly, both by the nature of the facts themselves, in which all nations were concerned, and by *Moses's* his description, that the generality of mankind were sufficiently instructed in them already.

Thirdly, It must be supposed that *Moses* hath set down the manner how

how that tradition was infallibly preserved so carefully to no purpose, though he took notice of all the circumstances necessary for that effect.

Fourthly, They must suppose that *Moses*, whilst he sojourn'd in the land of *Midian*, heard nothing either of their original and pedigree, nor yet of the other neighbouring nations who were descended from *Abraham*, although all these nations valued themselves upon their being descended from that Patriarch, and kept up their several pedigrees, by which they could trace their original with the same care as the *Israelites* did theirs, because they had the same pretensions that the *Israelites* had.

Lastly, We must absolutely take away the authority of the oracles recorded by *Moses* in *Genesis*. These oracles promise to *Abraham* the possession of the land of *Canaan* for his posterity, and threaten the *Canaanites* with several curses. *Jacob* by his will bequeathed *Sichem* to the tribe of *Joseph*: he expressly marks out the country which one of the tribes was to possess; he gives a description of the character and rank of every tribe. The accomplishment of those oracles, though never so exact and admirable, is of no manner of consequence, if we suppose that their particular predictions were absolutely unknown in *Abraham's* family; whereas their accomplishment, which he carefully describes from time to time, is the most solid demonstration which can be desired, to establish the divinity of those revelations, as well as of *Moses* his other books.

C H A P. XIX.

An Answer to an Objection which may be drawn from the Histories of the EGYPTIANS and CHALDEANS, concerning the Antiquity of the World.

WHAT I have already represented is sufficient to prove that *Moses* writ nothing in the book of *Genesis*, but what was then generally known by all the world. And I know nothing that can be objected with any probability, but what we read in the most ancient authors concerning the *Egyptian* and *Chaldean* history, and in the modern ones concerning that of *China*. We must then examine both the one and the other with attention, that we may leave no difficulties in so important a subject.

All that the *Atheists* can object against the history of *Moses*, concerning the epocha of the creation of the world as he had fixed it, is what *Diodorus Siculus* relates, that in the time of *Alexander the Great* there were some *Egyptians* that reckoned up three and twenty thousand years from the reign of the sun to *Alexander's* time, and that those who reckoned least, yet reckoned somewhat more than ten thousand years; which account exceeds the antiquity which *Moses* ascribes to the world in the book of *Genesis*, by many ages, where he represents the creation as a first which happened some few years more than two thousand five hundred before

before he wrote that book. How then did *Moses* write of things universally acknowledged by all the world? And they may here further aggravate what the same *Diodorus* hath observed, that the history of the *Egyptians* was not written like that of the *Greeks*; amongst whom, those who came first wrote their own histories, every man according to his own private humour, which caused that great variety amongst their historians: whereas amongst the *Egyptians* none wrote but by public authority, the priests alone having that particular employment reserved for them, to write their histories in their several generations.

This objection is easily confuted in two words: in short, how could the *Egyptians* have always had men to write their histories by public authority in all their succeeding generations, seeing there were, as *Diodorus* observes, such strange and vast divisions amongst themselves? If there were but two or three ages difference, more or less, nobody would look upon it as a material exception against the history of such a long series of time; but who can imagine that those men who differ no less than thirteen thousand years in their accounts of the duration of the same interval of time, had yet certain histories upon which these things were grounded?

This shews sufficiently, that as *Varro*, the greatest scholar the *Romans* ever had, hath divided antiquity into fabulous and historical, which he begins from the first *Olympiad*, leaving all which went before to the fabulous part, so we must of necessity make the same distinction in the matter of the antiquities of *Egypt*.

But I intend to do something more, and to consider this *Egyptian* history with a little more attention; out of which, I think, I may draw good arguments to confute the vanity of those passages in it opposed to *Moses*, and to confirm the authority of his book of *Genesis*, and the truth of the chiefest transactions recorded in it.

I shall not at present take notice, that although the *Egyptians*, about their latter times, have maintained that the elements were eternal, yet they have sufficiently acknowledged that the world had a beginning, seeing they make no mention of any thing before their thirty Dynasties, which in all did at the most amount to no more than 36525 years.

Neither do I think necessary to mention here that they have sufficiently acknowledged the beginning of mankind, seeing they held that men were first born in *Egypt*; although they endeavoured to make good their pretensions by that sottish assertion of the easy production of frogs out of the mud of their fens, as the same *Diodorus* tells us.

But there are three things which I must here take notice of, because they do most certainly decide the question.

The first is, That by that long reign which they ascribe to their gods and heroes, there is nothing else meant but the motion of the stars, and nothing like a real kingdom. That prodigious number of years does not relate to the duration of the world, as if it had subsisted so long; but to the return of the sun, and the moon, and the five other planets, and of the heavens, to the same point from whence, according to the opinion of the *Egyptians*, they first began their course: in a word, it is only the great astronomical year, about which, as *Aristotle* tells us, the ancients have had so many different opinions, and the *Egyptians* have so little

little agreed, as the history of their antiquities, related by *Diodorus*, plainly shews. One thing evidently proves what I here alledge, which is, that they have reckoned up but fifteen Dynasties to *Jupiter*, the last of the heroes, that is to say, but fifteen persons to *Jupiter*, who is *Ham* the third son of *Noah*.

This comes very near *Moses*'s calculation, who reckoneth *Noah* as the tenth man from *Adam*: for it is very likely that those ignorant people, after a long process of time, have joined *Cain* and *Abel* with *Shem* and *Japhet*, and *Misraim* the son of *Ham*, which makes up the sixteen Dynasties; except we choose to say that the *Egyptians* thought fit to join the seven generations of *Cain* to those before the flood, which comes very near to the same account. All this, according to the fantastic notions of those ancient people who deified the first men, and gave them afterwards the names of some stars, to impress upon their posterity a greater veneration for them; and in particular, according to the groundless imagination of the *Egyptians*, who were resolved to maintain that the first men were formed in their own country. And in short we find that those Dynasties for the most part, if we except those of *Vulcan* and of the sun, have been but of a very short continuance, and even shorter than that which *Moses* ascribes to the lives of the ancient Patriarchs, which we have already set down.

The second thing that is observable in the confutation of this false antiquity, if one would take what the *Egyptians* have related of their Dynasties before *Menes*, and *Jupiter* the last of their heroes, in a historical sense, is, that there are still sufficient marks of the newness of the world, as *Moses* hath described it, in the remaining fragments of the true *Egyptian* history.

First, We see that *Egypt* hath constantly carried the name of *Ham* amongst the *Gentiles*, as well as in the holy Scriptures. It was called so in *Plutarch*'s time: the *Egyptian Thebes* was called *Hammon No Bach* 30. which is the name of the *Egyptian Jupiter*, as the heathen authors *Herodotus* and *Plutarch* testify. Now it is visible that all this was for no other reason but because *Egypt* had fallen to the share of *Ham*, *Noah*'s third son, who settled there, and whose posterity did afterwards people *Africa*, and gave it their several names, as *Moses* particularly observes.

Secondly, One sees that *Egypt* hath more particularly borne the name of *Mizraim*, which it bears still, and which was given to it, in respect of one of its parts, because of *Mizraim* the son of *Ham*. And it would be ridiculous for one to imagine that those characters given by *Moses*, had been allowed of in the world, except he had had good grounds to describe their original in the same manner as he hath already done.

Thirdly, One sees that all the Dynasties of *Egypt*, that is to say, all the several branches of the kings who have reigned over the several parts of *Egypt*, did all acknowledge *Menes* for their common founder.

This *Menes* being the same with that *Mizraim* of *Moses*, as I shall shew hereafter; it is visible that the *Egyptians*, who in all likelihood have ascribed to *Menes* what they might more justly have ascribed to *Jupiter Hammon*, because they would distinguish their kings from heroes, have exactly followed the ideas of *Moses*, in representing one as the com-

mon father of all the several branches of kings who divided *Egypt* amongst themselves.

Fourthly, One sees that the invention of the arts most necessary to human life have been attributed either to *Menes* the first king of *Egypt*, or to his successors. It was this *Menes*, or one of his successors, who invented laws, letters, astronomy, music, wrestling, physic, hieroglyphics, anatomy, and architecture. All this plainly shews that the *Egyptians* had been mistaken, if they had ascribed to the world as great an antiquity as one would think they did, by the vast extent of time which they ascribed to the Dynasties of their gods and heroes. How could the world have continued above thirty thousand years without those arts which are so necessary for the convenience of human life? How could men not have found out, during such a prodigious succession of ages, those arts, the invention whereof the *Egyptians* do ascribe to their first king, or to one or two of his successors, during a very short interval of time?

Fifthly, One sees in the history of *Egypt* the same decay in religion that *Moses* speaks of (e). The ancients unanimously agree that the *Egyptians* had at first neither statues nor images in their temples, which perfectly agrees with what *Moses* tells us of the times after the flood: but they tell us also, that the *Egyptians* afterwards made some statues, and consecrated in their temples the figures of great numbers of animals. Some are of opinion, and that probably enough, that this came from the belief which they entertained afterwards of the transmigration of souls into other animals, an opinion which they thought did necessarily flow from the doctrine of the immortality of the soul.

Sixthly, However, one sees in the sixth place, that as *Moses* represents *Nimrod*, one of *Ham*'s posterity, as the founder of an empire in *Assyria*, where he formed the manners of the inhabitants according to the platform of the *Egyptian* principles, so the ancients have observed, that the famous *Assyrian Belus* came out of *Egypt*; and it is natural to conceive, that there he planted idolatry, which began even before *Abraham*'s time (f); if it be true, as the *Jews* observe, that the tower of *Babel* was a temple, wherein an idol was consecrated to worship him. At least, that conjecture hath a very solid ground, if we consider the idolatry of the *Babylonians* towards this *Bel*, whom they worshipped as a god, according to the Pagans custom of adoring the founders of kingdoms, after their decease, as gods.

The third thing we are here to take notice of, contains a demonstration of the truth of the book *Genesis*, if that which is recorded in it concerning the time of the flood, be compared with the Dynasties of the *Egyptian* kings. I will not say that those *Egyptians* who had any knowledge of the flood, did exactly mark out the time of it, as *Moses* doth; but I believe I may be able to shew out of their common opinions, something very near equivalent.

They are all agreed that *Menes* was the first king of *Egypt*, and lived about fourteen hundred years before the famous *Sesostris*, as *Herodotus* and *Diodorus Siculus* do both relate it: now, who should this king of *Egypt*

(e) *Herod. lib. ii. cap. 4. Lucian de Dea Syr.*

(f) *Pausan. in Messen. p. 261.*

Egypt be, whom some call *Sesenchosis*, unless he is the same with *Shishak* whom the Scripture speaks of in the history of *Rehoboam* (g), even the same famous conqueror who took *Jerusalem* in the fifth year of *Rehoboam's* reign? If one calculates the time from the flood to the fifth year of *Rehoboam*, he will find that this *Menes*, the first king of *Egypt*, is no other than the *Ham* of *Moses*; and on the other side, that there is very little difference, in respect to that interval of time, betwixt the chronology of the *Egyptians* and that of the Scriptures. Thus the *Egyptian* account confirms *Moses's* narrative, and the authority of the holy writers, who are very particular in stating the times of every thing: whereas the *Egyptians*, taking all in great, could never arrive at that exactness.

This observation is of very great use, to shew the certainty of *Moses's* chronology according to the *Hebrew* text; for that of the *Septuagint* reckons up above two thousand years from the flood to *Sesostris*; whereas the *Egyptians* did reckon up but a little above fourteen hundred years from *Menes*, the first king of *Egypt*, to *Sesostris*.

There is less difficulty to answer the objection which may be made against the book of *Genesis*, from the pretended antiquity of the *Chaldeans*. The same *Diodorus Siculus* (h) who saith that the *Egyptians* proposed so great an antiquity of the world, tells us also that the *Chaldeans* believed it eternal, and that they boasted, in *Alexander's* time, that they had learned astronomy by tradition, from their ancestors, who had all successively made it their study for four hundred seventy-two thousand years together. But there is nothing vainer than these pretences.

I shall not stand to shew here the folly of their opinions about the eternity of the world: if *Aristotle* seems to have authorised it, yet it is enough to confute that opinion, to consider, that it is repugnant to the common notion of all the nations of the world; so that *Democritus* himself, who pretended that the world was made by chance, yet durst not oppose the common and general opinion of the world's being new, though he had the boldness to reject the author of it, and that action by which it was created.

Neither do I intend to be prolix here in confuting the supposition of the *Chaldeans*, about their ancestors following the study of astrology for 472000 years successively: the impossibility of the thing in itself is apparent by the certainty of the flood, which was acknowledged by all those nations of whom we have any antiquities, though never so little considerable, in *Pagan* authors.

But I shall make two observations, whereof one shews the folly of the *Chaldean* hypothesis, and the other doth invincibly establish the authority of the book of *Genesis*, if it be compared with what we know for certain, and in the *Chaldean* history.

The first is, That the most ancient authors are of opinion, that the *Chaldeans* are descended from the *Egyptians*, who looked upon them as a colony of their own. *Diodorus Siculus* saith, that the *Egyptians* maintained that they had sent out several colonies into several parts of the world; that *Belus* the son of *Neptune* and *Lybia*, had conducted one into *Babylon*, and that having fixed it near *Euphrates*, he established some priests among them

(g) I. Kings xiv. 26.

(h) *Diodor.* l. 2. sect. 30, 31.

them according to the *Egyptian* custom, who were free from all public charges and offices, whom the *Babylonians* do call *Chaldeans*, and who, according to the example of the *Egyptian* priests, philosophers, and astrologers, did apply themselves to the observation of the stars. *Hesiodus* and *Pausanias* say the same with *Diodorus* (i).

Now, one need only examine here, what the *Egyptians* do say about the invention of *astrology*, which they ascribe to *Menis*, that is to say, to *Ham*, or to *Mizraim*, who lived after the flood, thereby to discover the foolish vanity of the *Chaldeans*.

It is plain that the *Chaldeans* grew so vain, by the growth of so considerable an empire as theirs was, that they would be no longer beholding to the *Egyptian* astrologers, whom all other nations have looked upon as the first inventors of that science, to the inventing and perfecting of which, all men know that the *Egyptian* climate, where the sky is always free from clouds, did very much contribute.

And it is very considerable, that both the *Chaldeans* and the *Egyptians* began their year with the same month, according to *Censorinus's* observation, c. xxi. *de Die Nat.*

I know very well, the ancient heathens were mistaken when they pretended that the *Chaldeans* went out of *Egypt*, as a plantation: there is, no doubt, a kind of illusion in this their opinion; but yet the ground and origin of it is uncontrollable, because the *Chaldeans* are descended from *Cush*, *Ham's* eldest son, as *Moses* tells, *Gen. x.* Therefore, though we should grant that the *Chaldeans* were the first inventors of *astrology*, yet this would always be certain, that it was found out only since *Ham's* time, whom the *Egyptians* did look upon as the last of their heroes, or as the first of their kings.

The other observation which ought to be well minded here, is taken out of the true and genuine *Chaldean* antiquities. One may prove by the astronomical demonstrations of the *Chaldeans*, which the people of *Israel* was altogether unacquainted with; that *Moses* followed a calculation which was then generally known.

Aristotle, the first *Grecian* that ever taught the eternity of the world, contrary to *Moses's* history, is the man who furnishes us with it. He took care to send over into *Greece* the astronomical observations of the *Chaldeans* (k), by which it appeared that *Babylon* was taken by *Alexander* about 1903 years after its foundation. Now that calculation agrees exactly with that of *Moses*, who gives us the description of the tower of *Babel* (l), and explains the original of the name of that city, which was built some ages after, by the confusion of tongues which then happened. And truly, it would be very admirable, that the heavens in their motions should have entered into a confederacy with *Moses*, to justify a chronology invented by him in sport, without keeping to any rules, but writing by chance, and without any certain principle.

(i) *Ap. Joseph. Antiq. l. 1. c. 5. Pausan. Messen. p. 261.*

(k) *Simplic. in l. 2. dr. celo.* (l) *Gen. xi.*

C H A P. XX.

An Answer to the Objection which may be drawn out of the History of China, against the Mosaic Hypothesis, concerning the Newness of the World.

I COME now to the other objection which may be made against *Moses's* calculation, according to the *Hebrew* text, as we have it now. It is drawn from the History of *China*, whose uninterrupted series runs up the succession of their emperors to *Fohius*, who reigned about four hundred years before the flood. Some learned men have already made use of that argument, to discredit the Mosaic chronology according to the *Hebrew* text, and to cry up the calculation of the *Septuagint*, which exceeds that of the *Hebrew* text in the history before the flood, by 800 years, and above 700 in the history from the flood to *Moses*. This objection appears very strong to those who read in the history of *Martinus*, that there is not the least interruption in the catalogue of the kings of *China* from *Fohius*; that the history of their actions is so certain, having always been written by a public authority, that no man can reasonably entertain any doubt about it: and the missionaries in *China* have thought that there was no other way to reconcile the Mosaic chronology with the *Chinese*, but in making use of the *Septuagint's* account; and wherein they agree with all the Asiatic Christians, and even those in *Europe*, who follow the *Septuagint* in their reckoning up the years of the world, for the most part; though *St. Hierome's* translation, which follows the *Hebrew* text exactly, is received in the west.

But, after all, there is little difficulty in answering this objection; and we may hereupon easily satisfy those who do not dispute only for disputing sake, but are ready to examine this question with that equity which is requisite in the examination of all questions of that nature.

I confess, ingenuously, that this history, which is one of the most ancient in the world, hath many illustrious characters of certainty, especially if we give credit to all that *Martinus* relates of it.

First, it marks out exactly the series and succession of all the kings of *China*, from the very beginning and original of that nation.

Secondly, it records in what year of each cycle of threescore years every king began his reign, and did such or such an action.

Thirdly, it relates some astronomical observations, older than any that have been made by the most ancient astronomers in other nations.

Fourthly, it was written by a public authority, and by such authority as lived in the time when the things which they record were transacted: the immediate successor to the empire taking always care, that the history of his predecessor should be written.

Nay, to all this we must add, that the *Chinese's* way of writing, making no use of letters, but of hieroglyphics, may have prevented those alterations which might otherwise have been made in their history;

whole life of a man being hardly sufficient to attain to the perfect knowledge of a tongue which hath above threescore thousand figures, which must be all learnt before a man can be able only to read and write.

But, besides that, all this depends upon the sole authority of *Martinus*, nobody else beside him having given us as yet any opportunities of examining those ancient monuments of *China*. We may find out of this very history some strong proofs to confirm that of *Moses*, and so easily resolve the difficulties which may be raised out of it, against the book of *Genesis*.

First, *F. Martinus* observes, that the common opinion of the *Chinese* is, that the world had a beginning; and though there be some of them of *Epicurus's* opinion, yet there was never any amongst them that was for the eternity of the world, but since the incarnation of *Christ*, and the introduction of idolatry amongst them.

Secondly, he tells us, that they commonly acknowledge a God, whom they call *Xangti*, which is not the name, but the epithet of God, this word signifying supreme governor of heaven and earth.

Thirdly, he saith that they acknowledge a first man, brought forth out of the chaos, in one night in the spring; which opinion some amongst them have made intricate, by the addition of their own fables.

Fourthly, he shews that sacrifices have been in use amongst them.

Fifthly, that they believe a certainty of punishments and rewards, after this life, for vice and virtue.

Sixthly, that they believe the existence of good and bad angels.

Seventhly, that they assign to some of them the protection of cities and provinces, and pay them great veneration at the instalment of their magistrates.

Eighthly, that they acknowledge them to be incorporeal beings, and that it is but of late that they have erected and consecrated statues to them.

And lastly, that they have a very great knowledge of the flood, which in their account happened about 3500 years before *Jesus Christ*.

Here are, we see, many truths which are the grounds of religion, and which were known to them; from whence we may easily judge, in comparing those truths with the history of *Moses*, that the ancient *Chinese* did agree with all other nations, in the believing the first principles of religion laid down by *Moses*.

We may likewise observe, that those antiquities of *China*, for the most part, are as like those recorded by *Moses*, as a tradition (which cannot but have received many alterations during such an interval of time) can be like to an exact narrative of matters of fact drawn up by an author who knew very well what he writ.

First, it appears that what they say concerning the thirteen successors of the first man, named *Puoncius*, all descended from him, is agreeable enough to the history of *Genesis*, which sets down the successive Patriarchs from father to son: all the difference is, that the *Chinese*, by a foolish ambition of appropriating all to themselves, maintain that those thirteen kings were all in *China*.

Secondly, what they tell us of the world being civilized under the second of those kings, called *Thienhoang*, after the death of the great dragon that had disturbed heaven and earth, agrees very well with the history of *Seth*, who began to form mankind to a right notion of the worship of God, when he separated them from *Cain's* family.

Thirdly, it is very probable that when the *Chinese* have reckoned up thirteen kings lineally descended from the first man and his successors, they have included in that number *Cain* and *Abel*, who, though they were both the sons of the first man, yet were not reckoned up by *Moses*, because his scope was only to give an account of the lineal descent of *Adam's* posterity by *Seth*.

They believe that under *Ginbohang* there was a kind of golden age, the earth being then fruitful to admiration; and that under his successor men being then extremely simple, and altogether ignorant of the several arts necessary to human life, as of characters and letters, one *Sujus*, to supply the want of them, contrived a way of keeping up the memory of things, by tying several sorts of knots upon a cord.

All which sufficiently evinces, that the belief of the world's being lately created, according to *Moses's* description, was as much received by the ancient people of *China* as by all other nations.

And here it is further observable, That the *Chinese* themselves, according to *Martinus's* account, do suspect all the historical records of their empire, before king *Fobius*, looking upon them as false and ridiculous; and indeed the people of that country, before *Fobius*, living like brute beasts, without any settled governments, laws, or arts, this alone is enough to confute those amongst the *Chinese* who maintain nowadays, that the duration of the world before *Confucius*, who lived about 500 years before *Jesus Christ*, was of no less than three millions two hundred threescore and seven thousand years; for hereby it clearly appears, that they have foolishly affected to surpass the *Chaldeans* in their vanity, who, believing the eternity of the world, pretended, in order both to prove their antiquity, and to give credit to their astrological observations, that astrology had been exercised amongst them for 472000 years before *Alexander's* entering into *Asia*.

After all, it is certain, that their calculation of 3000 years, from *Fobius* to *Jesus Christ*, is only incompatible with *Moses's* chronology, according to the *Hebrew* text, and not at all with that of the *Septuagint*.

But moreover, what can be more palpably fabulous than the whole history of *Fobius*, whom the *Chinese* suppose to have begun his reign 2951 years before *Jesus Christ*? First, he is called the Son of Heaven, because, they say, he had a mother and no father; and that his mother conceived him by the banks of a lake near the town *Lantien*, where, as she was walking, she saw the footsteps of a man upon the sand, and was at the same time surrounded on a sudden with a rainbow.

Secondly, the situation of that town, which is in the west of *China*, does demonstrate that the first inhabitants of *China* came either from the western parts of the world, and that consequently they were of *Shem's* posterity, according to *Moses's* account in the tenth of *Genesis*.

Thirdly, although there be perhaps no incongruity in their ascribing to him the study of astronomy, and the invention of several institutions necessary

necessary to human society, as laws, &c. yet what they add, that he was the first inventor of several figures, which he had seen upon the back of a dragon, sufficiently shews, that either the whole history is but a fable, or that he was a cheat, and imposed upon the simplicity of ignorant people.

What probability is there (seeing it is supposed *China* was then all over infested and overgrown with barbarism) that in his time it should be recorded in writing, 1. That he invented, instead of those knots before mentioned, the *hieroglyphics*, which are almost as obscure; 2. That men were then distinguished from women by the difference of their garments; 3. That marriages were then fixed and regulated, which before were as promiscuous amongst men as amongst beasts?

What they say of his being the author of a musical instrument of 36 chords, shews evidently the falsehood of the story; for there is nothing more improbable, than to suppose that he should arrive to such perfection of improvement in music as that comes to, when that art had but very lately been invented. It is all that men could attain unto, after they have long improved this art, the beginnings whereof, without doubt, as of all other arts, were very rough and imperfect.

Surely the *Egyptians* were more reasonable when they attributed the invention of the *lyre* with three strings to *Mercury*, *Saturn's* secretary, who is the same with *Noah*.

The history of *China* takes notice that the beginning of husbandry and physic was under *Fobius's* successor; it does not mention whether he was his son, or no; but it only gives an account of the first war, wherein he was routed by a petty king, one of his subjects, who succeeded him in the empire.

And what is most singular in that record, is, that therein is ascribed to that usurper, 1. the invention of the *cycle* of 60 years, which serves to fix their chronology; 2. the method of regulating weights and measures; 3. that it was by his means and encouragement that some of his contemporary subjects found out the sphere, arithmetic, laws, judicial astrology, several musical instruments, the art of dying and of coining, the joiners and carpenters trade, so far as to make boats and bridges. They pretend that he never died, but that he was translated alive into that place which the *Chinese* do assign for eternal happiness. It is *Pliny's* (m) observation, that this way and custom of deifying the first inventors of arts necessary to human life, is very ancient; but if it be an old custom, it is also a pregnant sign of the ignorance that reigned amongst those ancient people that used it. Therefore we may as justly suspect the history of the *Chinese*, amongst whom it is in use, as the *Egyptian* accounts, which were much of the same nature in *Alexander's* time, as we are informed by *Diodorus Siculus*. The posterity or the successors of those famous men have always affected in process of time, by such means, to immortalize their names, to the end they might raise up themselves and their families as well to power and authority, as to honour and veneration, above all other men with whom they conversed.

But, however, we may reasonably conjecture that those several passages

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recorded

(m) Lib. ii. cap. 7. Hist. Nat.

recorded in that history, having, for the greatest part of them, a great conformity with the transactions related in *Moses's* history, which was not unknown to the *Chaldeans*, with whom the *Chinese* had communication and correspondence, all those pretences and claims of theirs to the invention of these arts, is an honour which they have borrowed from others, to lend it to the founders of their empire; just as the *Egyptians* have appropriated to their first kings, some arts which were found out by the Patriarchs before the flood; or as the *Greeks* have made their first princes the first inventors of those very arts, the invention of which the *Egyptians* ascribed to their first kings.

And this reflexion will appear the more probable and natural, if we consider what they relate, that under the fourth successor of *Fohius* there arose an impostor, famous by his delusions, who endeavoured to alter the religion of the *Chinese*, and to bring in idolatry amongst them; which brought great misfortunes upon *China*. For hereby it is evident, that the *Chinese* in their history have disguised, and so appropriated to themselves, some passages which relate to *Nimrod's* time, since the original of idolatry is to be referred to the time of building of the tower of *Babel*, which was intended for an idol temple, if we will believe what passes for a received opinion amongst the *Jews*.

Chuenbious is said to have been the restorer of the worship of one God, and to have annexed the priesthood to the kingly power; and to have regulated the *Calendar*; and to have found out the ephemerides of the five planets, after an entire conjunction of those five planets, before the day of the conjunction of the sun with the moon; and to have fixed to that day, the beginning of the year, which agrees with our beginning the year in *January*.

But yet it is to be observed,

1. That, notwithstanding this pretended astronomical observation, there have been several alterations made of the beginning of the year according to the fancy and pleasure of several emperors, which shews that there was no constant rule observed in that country.

2. That *Martinus* seems to have approved of the calculation of this conjunction of five planets in *Aquarius*, to accommodate the false astrological prejudice of the *Chinese* with that of several authors, who, looking upon the flood as a natural event, have groundlessly imagined that it was brought to pass by the virtue and influence of such a conjunction, and that it was a certain sign of a flood. It is this foolish and whimsical fancy which hath made some *Grecians* preposterously sedulous in seeking out that dreadful year, the winter whereof was to drown the world with a flood, and the summer to burn it with a general conflagration, as *Consepinus* * and *Aristotle* † have observed it. It is a judicious remark which *Origanus* || hath made upon the observations of those astrologers who, from the conjunction of the planets in humid signs, use to foretel prodigious rains; for he shews that there is nothing more groundless and uncertain than such observations: and he gives a famous and remarkable instance of that uncertainty to the eternal shame of astrology, which is this; *John Staffler*, as *Cardan* tells us, having observed such a conjunc-

* *Genf. de die nat. c. 18.*

† *Arist. l. 1. meteor. c. 14.*

|| *Tom. 1. ephemer. p. 481.*

tion of all the planets in *Pisces*, in the year 1524, foretold there should come a general flood; whereof several people being afraid, retired to the tops of high mountains, but without any cause, for there was never seen a greater serenity of weather.

3. *Martinius* was certainly mistaken, when he ascribed to *Chuenhiaus* the regulating the *ephemerides* of the five lesser planets; seeing there are no such *ephemerides* in *China*, according to all the relations we have of that country; nor yet any of the sun and moon, so exact as we have in *Europe*: a pregnant demonstration of which is, that the missionary *Jesuits* have been raised up to the dignity of the chiefest *Mandarins* in *China*, only because their skill and learning in astrology was found to exceed that of any the most learned men amongst the *Chinese*, by many degrees.

These things I thought fit to observe, to shew that there is nothing in the history of *China*, which they so much cry up, that can any ways invalidate the authority of *Moses's* accounts in his book of *Genesis*, but what rather confirms it, if it be considered with attention.

It was not without reason that I have supposed that the memory of those ancient transactions was conveyed, though confusedly, to the *Chinese*: we have already intimated one of those probable means of conveyance of this tradition, by their commerce with the *Chaldeans*, who were well informed of the greatest part of those several transactions, and who had great intercourse with the remotest nations of *Asia*, towards the east. To this we may add another argument, yet more certain and sure; which is, the continual commerce that always had been betwixt the *Indies* and *China*, and the communication which the inhabitants of the neighbouring countries of the Red Sea have always had with all the eastern nations in the world: for it is plain that this commerce gave a great opportunity of communicating to those eastern nations, the knowledge of all those passages which were known to the *Chaldeans*; just as the like commerce with the western nations of the world proved a means of conveying to them the knowledge of the most part of the same things, which in process of time became the ground of the most ancient fables amongst the *Greeks*, among whom those fables made up the best part of their divinity.

But, besides all this, we may mention here another very likely means of conveyance, viz. the commerce of the *Chinese* with the *Tartars*, among whom the *Jews* of the ten tribes were dispersed and settled, within a short time after their captivity in *Assyria*; for as those *Jews* had with them the books of *Moses*, so they easily gave a great insight and knowledge in ancient history to those nations that have appropriated it to themselves, as may be made out by comparing their fabulous history with those books of *Moses*, which contain in effect all that relates to the original of those nations.

But whatever judgment may be made of those forementioned means of conveying the ancient tradition to the *Chinese*, I think that I have good ground to affirm,

1. That the historians that have written the lives of the first emperors of *China* were not contemporaries with those emperors, and that consequently

consequently they have not recorded things so well known, as it was supposed.

2. That the fables intermixed in their histories do sufficiently evidence the easy and credulous temper of those authors, which takes away from them all credit and belief.

3. That the greatest care of those authors was to persuade the world of the pretended antiquity of their nation, and so to raise the honour and reputation of it by glorious stories and fables.

4. That their affectation, in giving us an account of astronomy and judiciary astrology, was only to bring into credit and reputation those arts, the end and scope of which is to impose upon simple men, which is a ridiculous affectation, and such as hath exposed the *Chaldeans* and *Egyptians* to the just contempt and derision of all other nations.

5. That there is amongst them a diversity of opinions contrary to one another, about their antiquity; just as there were some amongst the *Egyptians* who reckoned up 23000 years from the reign of the sun to *Alexander*, when some others reckoned but a little above 10000 years.

6. That the *Chinese*, according to one of their own opinions, must say that the earth was without almost any inhabitants for 30000 years together, and above: whereas we see that in the space of five or six thousand years it is become inhabited as we see it; and that, within a little more, it will be so overstocked, as that it will not be able to yield provisions enough for all its inhabitants, as a learned *Englishman* hath of late proved it by a mathematical demonstration; which shews that the *Chinese* wanted certain grounds to go upon, in several accounts which they give of many transactions, and in the relating of which they are besides most confident.

Lastly, that therefore what is reported, that these *Chinese* authors did all write with public allowance for every king's decease, might indeed be so about the latter times, as it was practised in *Egypt*; but that it is as absolutely false, that the *Chinese* had ever in former times such public historians, and as it is false that the *Egyptians* had formerly any such, although they were as confident to say they had in *Alexander's* time, as the *Chinese* are now.

But this, I think, is sufficient for the clearing of that matter. We must now answer the last objection of *Atheists* against the authority of the book of *Genesis*.

C H A P. XXI.

Wherein the last Objection of ATHEISTS is answered.

AS I intend to clear all the difficulties which may arise about this important matter, in the minds of those that shall peruse these observations; I think myself obliged to prevent and resolve the only plausible

plausible objection I know remaining, after all what I have said upon this subject.

Perhaps some will be apt to reply here, that they indeed confess *Moses* to be the author of *Genesis*, and that, if that book had really been supposititious, it could never have gone under his name, nor be received as his in after ages; but that yet all this does not prove sufficiently the truth of those transactions recorded in that book; because *Moses* may have forced upon the people of *Israel* the belief of them, by those laws that he enacted amongst them, by which it was death for any man to dare to contest the truth of any thing he had written in his books. This, I think, is all that the most contentious *Atheists* can think of, to undermine the authority of *Moses's* history.

But this objection is easily answered, for it confutes itself. For,

First, it supposes the truth of these great miracles by which God established *Moses* the head and captain of the people of *Israel*; which miracles are every whit as hard to believe, as the several accounts of other things which we read of in the book of *Genesis*.

We find accordingly, amongst the heathens themselves, many monuments of those miracles done by the ministry of *Moses*, when he brought the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*; as I intend to shew in my observations upon the other four books of *Moses*.

Secondly, they must at least suppose that *Moses* hath given a true account of several passages, in which he could not impose upon other nations, which did not acknowledge his authority; as, for example, all that relates to the building of the ark, the greatest piece of architecture that was then in the world; and to the raising of the tower of *Babel*, the greatest building that ever was, and part of which is yet extant; for all these things were as so many witnesses of the truth of those transactions which he related.

Thirdly, they must likewise suppose that he hath related several other passages as exactly as he did those; as, for example, that of the division of tongues, which is an appendix of the history of the tower of *Babel*; that of the destruction of *Sodom*; the original of the neighbouring nations of *Canaan*, that of the *Jews*, of the *Moabites*, of the *Ammonites*, of the *Ismaelites*, and *Edomites*; for it is ridiculous to conceive that this law-giver should ever hope to persuade other nations to believe any false stories about matters so well and so generally known as those were amongst themselves.

Fourthly, they must suppose further, that he hath given a true account of the original of the *Israelites*, whose head and governor he was. How great and absolute soever the authority of *Moses* might be, it is ridiculous to imagine that ever he would have derived the original of the *Israelites* from any other than from their true ancestors. This appears the more necessary, in that we see, by the accounts he gives of things and pedigrees in *Genesis*, that he wrote that book, especially from the history of *Abraham* on to the end of it, only to shew the rights and just pretensions of the *Israelites* upon the land of *Canaan*.

Fifthly, they must yet further acknowledge, whether they will or not, the truth of the accounts he gives, concerning the original of the pretensions and divisions which were kept up amongst the twelve tribes of

Israel: now these pretensions having no other ground than the oracles which are related in his history, they sufficiently prove the authority of those oracles, against all the pretensions and objections of the Atheists.

What violence soever they may pretend that *Moses* might use to force an implicit belief of his history and blind obedience to his laws, yet no man of common sense and reason can ever think that he would have filled the accounts he gives of things of that nature, with lies, or that, if he had done it, he could ever have expected that his false accounts of them should ever have been credited by the neighbouring nations, or even by his own subjects.

But without urging here several other absurdities, which plainly shew that there is no distinction to be found betwixt the accounts of things which *Moses* recites as publicly known, and those which he relates of his own head, and private knowledge; there being, as I have already shewed, betwixt all those several accounts, such a natural coherence and necessary concatenation, that they cannot be divided from one another, without destroying the whole frame of his history; I say, that it is impossible that the law by which he makes it death for any one to contest the truth of his narration, should make the sincerity of it suspected.

I do not urge here, that there is an evident absurdity to suppose that *Moses* would ever have related together all those transactions, as the grounds of religion, if they had been absolutely unknown in the world before him.

Neither do I mention here, that suppose *Moses* had been so imprudent as to attempt such an undertaking, yet there is no reason to believe that a whole nation, and that a very numerous one, would have long persevered in a profession forced upon them by mere violence and tyranny.

Nor do I think it necessary to observe here, that the people of *Israel* were neither so patient, nor so easily persuaded by *Moses*, nor yet so submissive to him, as these objectors do imagine.

That is plain, and apparent enough from all their seditions and conspiracies against him.

Nor do I judge it necessary to observe here what is plain enough of itself, viz. that *Moses* had no successor any ways concerned to countenance and defend these pretended fictions and fables of his history. *Joshua*, his immediate successor, was of another tribe; and so were all the succeeding governors of *Israel*, until the *Maccabees* came.

But what I think deserves best to be observed here, is, that after *Moses* and *Joshua's* decease the people of *Israel* was brought under the subjection of the *Canaanites*, and consequently freed from the terror of that law of *Moses's* making, by which it was death for any one to contest the authority of his laws, and the truth of all his writings: there is but a little more than forty years interval betwixt the conquest of *Canaan* by *Joshua*, and the bondage of the *Israelites* under the neighbouring nations. Had it not been a fit time then, to cast off the yoke of *Moses's* laws, and to publish the pretended lies and impostures of his history? Was not the comparison which the *Israelites* could easily make betwixt the *Mosaic* writings, and the tradition generally received in the country of their captivity, a natural and ready means to undeceive them?

Yet, notwithstanding all this, we see that they obstinately entertain the belief

belief of the several transactions recorded by *Moses*, and stand firmly to all their pretensions: nay, we see them have recourse to the remedy of repentance which *Moses* prescribed them to use in those sad misfortunes which he foretold should befall them, and out of which he promised, at the same time, that God would miraculously deliver them; which indeed was done accordingly, even fourteen times within less than four hundred years, as is manifest from the book of *Judges*.

Can there then be a more pregnant argument, that if *Moses* made it death, by one of his sanctions, for any of the *Israelites* to contest the truth either of his writings, or of his oracles and miracles, it was not to force the belief of them without examination, but rather only to prevent the corruption of that people, and their mingling and confounding themselves with the heathens, which God intended to hinder on purpose, because he would have the *Messiah* to be born, according to his promise, out of that nation; which to effect, he thought fit, in his infinite wisdom, to employ the rigour of some capital laws, to keep that people unmixed and distinguished from all other nations of the world, till the *Messiah* was born?

CH. A. P. XXII.

The Consequences of what we have proved in our foregoing Observations upon the Book of GENESIS.

THESE several observations which I have made upon the Book of *Genesis*, are all, I think, very natural and easy; and, if I am not mistaken, sufficient to prove solidly the truth of *Moses's* account, of the creation of the world, and of the promise of the *Messiah*, which is the foundation of the Christian religion.

The conclusion that I draw out of the premises is, that,

First, I assert, that *Moses*, that famous *Hebrew* who was designed to be the heir of *Pharaoh's* daughter, is the true and sole author of the book of *Genesis*.

Secondly, I maintain, that this being once granted, he could not, according to his way of writing, record those important transactions he relates, otherwise than they really came to pass.

Thirdly, I maintain, that though he had not been an eye-witness of the creation of the world, yet he hath made the description of it according to such an authentic tradition as cannot be reasonably doubted of, because it was then the universal tradition, not only of the *Moabites*, of the *Ammonites*, of the *Ishmaelites*, and of the *Edomites*, who were all of *Shem's* posterity, and amongst whom he had been travelling for forty years together; but also of the *Egyptians*, of his own people, and, in a word, of all men then living in the world.

Fourthly, I maintain, that he never was found fault with, nor contradicted, till true reason and sense, if I may say so, was lost and banished from

from amongst mankind, till the *Egyptians*, for example, they who used before to look upon the *Greeks* as mere children and ideots, were fallen into so great a stupidity and depravation of sense, as to believe and maintain that men were first born in *Egypt*, because, forsooth, frogs did naturally, as they thought, breed out of their muddy fens and marshes.

Fifthly, I maintain, that for many ages after *Moses* nobody did ever publicly declare for the eternity of the world, nor yet for its fortuitous production. These opinions are mere absurdities and chimeras, brought forth into the world by the *Chaldeans* and *Greeks*, only about *Alexander's* time, or perhaps an hundred years before him, i. e. about eleven or twelve hundred years after *Moses's* decease.

Sixthly, I maintain, that seeing there is no particular time to be found wherein the reading of the law was interrupted and discontinued for any considerable time amongst the *Jews*; seeing it continues still to this very hour amongst them every sabbath-day, in the several places of the world wherein they are dispersed; and seeing besides, that it is certain that this law, which enjoins the observation of the sabbath, in remembrance of the creation, could never be imposed upon them, without their perceiving and declaring presently the novelty and supposition of that account, and consequently of the book wherein it is related;—seeing all this is certain, I do positively maintain, that the truth of the creation can never be better proved, than it is by the book of *Genesis*, because in it *Moses* hath followed the tradition of all the ages that preceded him, and only recorded in writing, what was then generally known of all men in the world; and that, in a time when every man was able to run his own pedigree up to *Adam*.

Lastly, I maintain, that as the certainty of the creation cannot reasonably be doubted of, without rejecting at the same time all those proofs from facts which I have brought to strengthen my assertion, so there is all the reason in the world to entertain the belief of it, as a matter of fact which is indisputable; as being related by the most ancient historian, confirmed by the most ancient tradition, believed by the most ancient people of the world, who did not only believe it, but also had always had, according to God's command, the memory of it celebrated amongst them and their ancestors, in all their generations, fifty-two times in a year, from the very beginning of the world.

PREFACE.

P R E F A C E.

WHEN I began at first these Reflexions upon the book of *Genesis*, I designed only to demonstrate the certainty of the creation of the first man, and so to shew, by arguments from matters of fact, that neither the creation of the world, nor yet the promise of the Messiah, which God made to man after his sin, can reasonably be disputed or doubted of.

I designed, after that, to establish the truth of Christ's resurrection, by such another undeniable argument, viz. by shewing that the apostles were eye-witnesses of it, and instituted a solemn day in every week to celebrate and perpetuate the memory of it, amongst men, from their time down to the end of the world. And this I thought was sufficient to demonstrate the truth of the Christian religion: for as the *Jews*, by the continual celebration of the sabbath every week, could easily run back to the creation of the world, which was the occasion of the institution of the sabbath, so the Christians may, by the weekly observation of the Lord's day, prove Christ's resurrection, which occasioned the institution of the Lord's day. If we consider the thing in itself, there is no less absurdity to dispute our Saviour's resurrection, than the creation of the first man.

Now if this argument holds, as there can be no easier, so neither can there be a stronger proof of the truth of the Christian religion; for, provided we be once well assured of the certainty of Christ's resurrection, we must acknowledge him to be the true Messiah, and consequently embrace his religion.

But it seems, in the heat of meditation, I was insensibly carried further in my observations upon the promise of the Messiah, than I thought at first to be. Therefore, instead of passing now, as I proposed in the beginning, to the proof of Christ's resurrection, which is a solid and compendious way of demonstrating the truth of his religion, I find myself engaged, according to my present method, to continue to make the like Reflexions upon the other Books of Holy Scripture, that I may yet more fully demonstrate that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah, whom God promised to man immediately after his sin.

And this I intend to shew so plainly, as will make it evident that God hath really accomplished his first designs, and exactly performed all his promises relating to the Messiah, according to the first ideas he gave of his coming, to the ancient Patriarchs.

First, then, I design to trace up the method that God was pleased to use, to make the Messiah known without mistake, whenever he should come into the world.

Secondly, I will make some Reflexions upon the several notions he gave of him long before, in his oracles, to characterise his person, his offices, his actions, his sufferings, his glory, &c.

Last of all, I will shew that we have all this whole project and design exactly accomplished in the history of the Gospel, as it was written by Christ's disciples. Now, as this method which God hath particularly chosen to make the Messiah known, appears also in the other Books of *Moses*; so I think it will not be amiss for me particularly to view and examine these Books, that I may have occasion to illustrate several things in them which deserve a particular attention, especially when they are considered together, and as it were at one view.

For the prophecies being thus considered together in their connexion and progress, do more plainly evidence God's design, and may better convince or confound the *Jews*. Therefore I intend accordingly to consider those oracles with attention, and to join them together, that so they may in their conjunction cast forth the brighter beams of light, to the conviction of all infidels who may happen to peruse this book.

For I am persuaded that, after the perusal of my observations in it, an ordinary attention in the reading of the Gospel will be sufficient to convince any man that *Jesus Christ* is the true Messiah, which is all I intend to prove, as the conclusion of this Treatise.

Now as the examination of the Patriarchs religion according to the account *Moses* hath given us of it in his book of *Genesis*, hath taken up the first part of it; so I design to examine in this second part the *Israelites* religion, and to follow in my search the account which *Moses* gives of it in his other four Books.

And as, to effect this, it is very important to establish beforehand the authority of those four Books; so I intend to shew, first of all, that *Moses* is the true author of them, and that they have intrinsic characters of undeniable certainty.

Then, secondly, it will be natural for me to shew, that *Moses*, in the writing of them, had the promise of the Messiah in view, as particularly promised of God to the Patriarchs of his own nation, and as being consequently the principal, if not the sole object of their hope.

Thirdly, I intend to shew, that if we seriously examine *Moses*'s laws, we shall find in them such a method observed, as is both very agreeable to the manifestation of God's design in *Genesis*, and very worthy of his wisdom, especially if we consider what he was pleased to reveal unto us, of his intentions, by the Prophets who followed *Moses*.

R E F L E X I O N S

UPON THE FOUR LAST

BOOKS OF MOSES,

TO

ESTABLISH THE TRUTH

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

C H A P. I.

That it cannot reasonably be doubted, but that MOSES is the Author of EXODUS, and of the three other following Books.

THIS is a truth which may be grounded upon several solid arguments.

I might observe, That *Moses* hath always been acknowledged, by the very heathens themselves, not only to be the most ancient historian, but also the most ancient legislator in the world.

I might likewise observe, That there is a particular connexion betwixt the book of *Genesis* and the other books of *Moses*, as well in regard of the general design of their author, as of the matters treated of in them. For example, we see that the greatest part of the laws and transactions which we find written and recorded there, derive their original from those transactions and passages that we read of in *Genesis*. Thus we may plainly discern

discern that the pretension of the *Israelites* upon the land of *Canaan*, was grounded upon the promise that God made to *Abraham* to give it to his posterity, in the fourth generation. Thus we may see that the *Amalekites* could have no other reason to make war against the *Israelites*, than the old alliance that was formerly made betwixt *Amalek* and the *Canaanites*, which without doubt engaged his posterity to be the first opposers of the establishment of the *Israelites* in the land of *Canaan*. Thus we see that the seditions of the *Israelites* against *Moses*, under *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, did proceed from the order of the birth of the children of *Israel*, as it is set down in *Genesis*, because the eldest, thinking themselves wronged of their birthright, thought they might justly rebel against *Moses* in order to recover it.

But I haste to things more material than these. And, first, it is here observable, that those books were not only religiously kept in every family of *Israel*, but that they were also once solemnly deposited in the tabernacle as a public record, and that by *Moses* himself, a little before his death, that they might be a testimony against that people, as we read it *Deuteronomy* xxxi. 26.

Secondly, it cannot be denied that *Moses* did straitly charge both *Joshua* and the heads of the people to read them frequently and carefully, for it is expressly said so, *Joshua* i. 8. Nay, we see, about 500 years after, the holy man *David*, who had made, during his life, the supreme felicity of a man to consist in the reading of the law of God day and night (n)—we see, I say, that holy man give on his death-bed the same charge to *Solomon*, *I. Kings*.

Thirdly, moreover, it is certain that there were many laws and sanctions contained in those books, which are the foundation of the history of succeeding times; and this is the reason why we read nothing in the book of *Joshua* concerning the several blessings and curses which were to be pronounced upon the mounts *Ebal* and *Gerizim*, because the form of them was to be borrowed from the books of *Moses*, which were public and authentic. The same reflexion may be made upon the law of the first-fruits, and upon the prayer which was to be made upon the tithes of the third year; as likewise upon many other laws.

Fourthly, it is certain that those books were read over every seventh year, according to the injunction of that law which we find in *Deuteronomy* xxxi. 10, 11. which was commanded to be done for the instruction of posterity, as it is intimated in the thirteenth verse of the same chapter. Whereupon it may not be preposterous to consider here God's methods, to prevent all forgery and imposture in this matter.

We see that it was, during the longevity of human life, a constant and universal custom amongst all the Patriarchs, to *Moses's* time, to put (when they lay on their death-beds) their posterity in mind of the most important truths, and of the fundamental articles of religion; because, as all admonitions and exhortations made at such a time are always looked upon as sincere, so they seldom fail of being favourably construed and better entertained than they would be at any other time. We have, as instances of this ancient custom, the examples of *Abraham*, of *Isaac*, of *Jacob*, of *Joseph*, &c. who in that, I make no doubt, followed the custom

custom of their pious ancestors, who, in all likelihood, derived it from Adam himself. That custom, we see, was of an admirable use to perpetuate the memory of illustrious transactions: what was then spoken by those pious venerable men, was a kind of a public sermon, because it was delivered before those numerous families which met then all together about the bed of their common head and father; and that, upon such an occasion as did extraordinarily excite their attention.

To this custom succeeded another, which was, that when the greatest captains and judges of the people of *Israel* were sensible of their approaching death, then they usually called the people together, to give them such exhortations, reproofs, and admonitions, as they judged most proper, either for their encouragement, or for their reformation; nay, and that even in some occasions many of them have affected to have their speeches made public, and deposited in the tabernacle: thus did *Moses* and *Joshua*, and the greatest number of the Judges, and *Samuel*, and *Solomon*, &c.

We know that the books of *Moses* were formerly read every sabbath-day, as St. *James* doth attest it in *Acts* xv. And though there be no express command about it in *Moses's* writings, yet we find there something equivalent to it, in the strict charge given by him to all the people, to be continually conversant in his books, and to instruct their families at all times in the laws and doctrines delivered in them; for it is plain, that if the *Israelites* were bound by that command of *Moses* to read his books every day, they were more particularly obliged, by the same command, to read them on the sabbath-day, which was made a day of rest by God, particularly on purpose that all men might the better attend on that day to the reading and meditating God's laws, and the performing all other religious duties.

We know besides that those books were continually explained both by the doctors of the law, and the *Levites*, who were on purpose dispersed through the whole land of *Canaan*, that they might the better attend and perform the duties of their ministry.

We see that *Moses* in his writings hath exactly kept a kind of journal, which cannot easily receive any alteration. If we read hereupon what relates to the sojourning of the *Israelites*, and the several removals of their tents in the desert, we shall be easily convinced by the very form and style of those books, as we have them now, that they were formerly publicly received, and were exactly transcribed out of the original, and that, if in process of time they suffered any alteration, it was only as to some appendixes or postscripts inserted by *Ezra*, or some other Prophet, by way of explication.

We see in those books a history written without disguise or partiality, exact in relating all circumstances, of places, times, and persons, even in the narration of things of small importance for the main drift of the author; there are, besides, some passages recorded in them, which any author who lived after *Moses's* time would certainly have left out, if for no other reason, yet at least to abolish the memory of some actions dishonourable to some great families, and whole tribes of *Israel*.

Again, we read in them the songs and other public monuments which

which were made upon extraordinary occasions, to preserve the memory of them the better.

I have but three observations more to make here, and then I have done with this chapter.

The first is, that those books have been constantly quoted by all the authors amongst that people who followed *Moses*, and that their quotations do exactly agree with the text of those books, as we have them now; which is a certain sign, as well of the sincerity, as of the antiquity of that author. They were as much esteemed in *Israel* as in *Judah*, both people did observe them as their law: the Prophets that arose from time to time, did always, and upon all occasions, acknowledge and maintain their authority.

Thus we find in the book of *Joshua*, quoted out of them, what relates to the curses and blessings, to the prophecies, and divisions of the land of *Canaan* amongst the tribes of *Israel*. The whole history of the thirteen judges whom God raised up amongst the people, is nothing, in general, but an account of the accomplishment of that promise which God hath formerly made to *Moses*, to raise up from amongst that people such men, in the time of their afflictions and captivities, as would be the assertors of their liberty.

We see there, in particular, the execution of *Moses's* order concerning *Caleb*, and of that law in *Deuteronomy* which prescribes the manner of dismissing from the army those that are fearful and faint-hearted, and of that other concerning the *Nazarites* (o), &c.

Thus we see, that the rules and laws prescribed in those books continued in force in the time of *Ruth*, *David's* great grandmother, that appears plainly by their observation of those laws which enjoined the next kinsman to take to wife the widow of his deceased relation, and to redeem his inheritance. As for *David* and *Solomon*, they are continually alluding to something or other delivered in those books: *Nehemiah* quotes them in Chap. xiii. of his book, and that was in the year of the world 3563; and so does *Malachi* in the Chapters iv. and v. of his prophecy, in the year 3580.

The second observation, which is very material, is, that the author of those books hath inserted in them an express prohibition of adding any thing to them, as we see it *Deuteronomy* iv. 2.

It is then impossible, seeing that the whole people of the *Jews* have always acknowledged the Divine authority of those books, that they should ever have attempted the alteration of any thing in them.

Nay, we see, not without wonder, that after the greatest part of the ten tribes of *Israel* were transported into *Assyria*, those that were sent from *Assyria* to inhabit their country, did receive that law, and that their posterity have kept it all along to this day, as uncorrupted as the *Jews*, although they continue their mortal enemies, and have been exposed to all the changes and revolutions that can befall a nation, during the long interval of 2400 years.

The third observation, which deserves a singular attention, is, that notwithstanding the great and many corruptions which the commonwealth of *Israel* fell into, yet these books have still been kept up in the same

(o) Judg. i. 20. Judg. vii. 3. Judg. xiii. 3.

same form that we have them now: it appears out of the history of *Josiah*, related 2 *Kings* xxiii. 21. that after the book of the law, of *Moses's* own writing, was found in the temple, the king commanded all the people to keep the passover unto the Lord, as it is written in the book of this covenant: now we have the institution of the passover, *Exod.* xii. which shews that *Josiah*, by the book of this covenant, meant the books of *Moses*, such as we have them nowadays, and such as they were when *Moses* deposited them into the sanctuary.

It is important to consider well all that is related in the forementioned chapter of II. *Kings*; for we may gather out of it that it was according to the directions of this law that they began to reform all the superstitions and idolatries which had been introduced in their religion, and countenanced by the royal authority, from *Solomon's* time to *Josiah*: this chapter relates and commends the proceeding of *Josiah*, only in opposition to the ill government of his predecessors, and to the public monuments of their superstitions, which he abolished in obedience to God's laws, contained in the books of *Moses*.

However, it is certain, that it was no easy matter to impose herein upon posterity.

For, first, the transactions recorded in the books of *Moses* did not only relate to the people of *Israel*, but also to most of the neighbouring nations.

Secondly, the memory of them continued so lively and universal, that, almost 1500 years after *Moses*, the names of those magicians spoken of, *Exod.* vii. 11. were as yet known, not only amongst the *Jews*, as we see it by an express passage of *St. Paul*, who speaks of them, and mentioneth their names, 2 *Tim.* iii. 8. but also among the heathens, as both *Pliny* and *Numenius* do attest it (p).

I point only at those general proofs at present, because I have already made use of them, and shewed their force in my observations upon *Genesis*, and because I intend to repeat and improve some of them hereafter in this treatise. But now, in order to follow my present design, I must come to the more particular consideration of the things contained in these books, which will much conduce to the confirmation of the same truth.

CH A P. II.

That both the Character of *Moses's* Person, and the Nature of the Things he relates, have always made Men read his Books with Attention.

THE subject of some books is such, as that alone would recommend them to the attention of any reader, though their author had no reputation in the world; but when, besides the importance of

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their subject, the author of them is famous and of great repute, then, to be sure, they never fail to be read with serious attention, and preserved with as great a care. The books of *Moses* have both these advantages, so that they cannot reasonably be suspected of the least alteration or forgery.

The first character that we discover in these books, at the first viewing of them, is the great singularity and admirable diversity of their style, and of the matters they treat of.

We do not see that other legislators did ever affect to act the parts of historians; no, they content themselves with their absolute power to make laws, without giving any reason for the sanction of them; therefore we see that there is commonly nothing more dry and sapless than all their regulations, about both civil and religious matters.

But *Moses*, we see, hath followed a more reasonable and more satisfactory method: all his regulations are grounded upon the great transactions which he relates; he enacts no law of any consequence, but he intimates to the *Jews*, at the same time, the reasons which challenge their obedience, and makes them by that means reflect both upon the several mercies of God bestowed upon them, and call to mind the great miracles they had been eye-witnesses of.

I confess, indeed, that the use and scope of some of his regulations is very abstruse, especially now that we are ignorant of the several heathen customs which God designed to abolish from among that people newly come out of *Egypt*, where during their captivity they had complied and accustomed themselves in a great measure to the rites and religion of their masters the *Egyptians*. But yet, how abstruse soever the design of some of those laws may now appear to be, we have good ground to affirm, that the general scope of them all was, to keep that people from idolatry in distinguishing them from all other nations, and also to quicken their desires and expectations of the *Messiah*, the promise of whose coming had been made by God in the very beginning of the world, and renewed several times to the heads of their nation.

However, we see in the books of those laws, religion and policy so interwoven together, that the latter seems to subsist only by the support and assistance of the former; which is contrary to the custom of human legislators, who do not so much regard the establishment of religion, as the preservation and welfare of the state and commonwealth.

If any *Jew* had a mind to be informed about the tradition of his ancestors, and the transactions of old, *Moses* hath preserved it with such care, with so many marks of fidelity, and so clear and plain, that there is no other history besides his, that can give any satisfactory information about the original of things; all the fables of the heathens, which yet make up the most ancient tradition they have, being nothing else but a corruption and depravation of the several truths that *Moses* relates in his history.

If any *Jew* desired to see the beginnings of that commonwealth of which he was a member, *Moses* gives an accurate account of them.

If any *Jew* desired to know the original of mankind, or what was the true happiness of man, and what he ought to do, in order to be a partaker

taker of that happiness, *Moses* teaches all that with great evidence and exactness.

If any *Jew* had a mind to know the occasion of those songs that were so much in fashion among those of his nation, he might easily satisfy his curiosity, by reading *Moses's* history.

If any *Jew* desired to know what sort of exhortations they were, which the Founder both of their religion and commonwealth had formerly made to their fore-fathers, *Moses* relates a great many of them in his books.

If any *Jew* had a mind to receive instruction about the original and cause of those temporal blessings he enjoyed in the land of *Canaan*, which God had possessed his nation of, after the expulsion of those people that had been the inhabitants of it for many ages, *Moses* gives us good account of all that, as can be desired.

If any *Jew* had a mind to know the original of the several calamities that befell his nation on several occasions, *Moses* acquainted them both with the cause and remedy of all their afflictions.

Lastly, if the *Jews* desired to be informed of the future condition of their commonwealth in after ages, *Moses* foretells it in so particular and clear a manner, that they might look upon his prophecies, not as certain prophecies only, but as a plain history of future events, begun and traced out before their accomplishment.

All this is so much the more considerable, to oblige us to read the books of *Moses* with care, that we may justly observe three things in his person, which as they raise him above all common authors, so they cannot but strengthen the belief, and increase the esteem and veneration, which we ought to have for his history.

The first is, that whereas all men are careful to conceal their own infirmities, and whatever is dishonourable to their families, *Moses* on the contrary seems to have affected to record all the things that could blemish the memory of his ancestors, and derogate to his own reputation. He blemishes *Jacob's* memory, by his relating how he preferred *Joseph*, the son of his beloved wife, to *Reuben* his eldest, whom he unjustly deprived of his birthright, in favour of the other; which injustice is expressly forbidden by one of *Moses's* laws.

Thus he lays an eternal blot and reproach upon the memory of *Levi*, the head of his own family, when he mentions his cruelty and violence against the *Sichemites*, and the dispersion of his posterity amongst the other tribes of *Israel*.

Nay, what is more, he vilifies his own birth, by forbidding any marriage betwixt an aunt and her nephew, seeing he relates that he himself was born of *Jocabed*, both aunt and wife to his father *Amram*; he describes his own incredulity with all the ingenuity imaginable, when he represents the several miracles which God wrought by him; he seems to speak of himself, only to lay open his own failings and sins. Such a sincerity and impartiality, we know, confirms and increases mightily the authority of any author.

The second thing is, that *Moses*, not regarding the advantage and honour of his own family, left the government of *Israel* to *Josbua*, one of the tribe of *Ephraim*, and so reduced his own children and their posterity

rity to the low condition of the rest of the *Levites*, who were of an inferior rank to that of priests; for we do not see that they ever after renewed the pretensions which they might otherwise have had to succeed *Moses*. Now, such neglect of his family shews that *Moses's* principles were raised much above the ordinary pitch of the generality of law-givers, who were absolute and supreme over their people.

The third thing observable here is, that *Moses* had no share in the conquest of the land of *Canaan*; it all was subdued after his death: nay, it was that conquest that fixed and settled the commonwealth of *Israel*, which was before unsettled, and as it were ambulatory in the desert. Now, how could such a singular design, as *Moses* describes in his law, be put in execution by any other than by him that formed it? It was *Joshua* that made this conquest of the land of *Canaan*, and possessed the *Jews* of it. Now, to be sure, if that people had not been then fully persuaded of the Divine authority of *Moses's* law, they would never have failed, after so great an alteration, to make use of their power and liberty in throwing off the troublesome yoke of his laws; nor yet would *Joshua*, and all his successors in the government, ever have maintained the authority of those laws, if they had not looked upon *Moses*, not only as an extraordinary man, but also as one particularly commissioned by God to make that body of laws for the regulating of his people.

We read, in those books, of *Moses's* dying in the mountains of *Mosorah*; now, that being supposed, how is it possible, that if the people of *Israel* had not been fully convinced that God himself gave their law to *Moses* with all the circumstances mentioned by him, they would have continued to keep up such a ridiculous and ill-grounded conceit? If he had really by his tyrannical authority forced the *Israelites* into a compliance to his laws during his life, why did they not, as soon as he was dead, with the fear of his authority, shake off the yoke of his laws, and all respect for his memory?

One thing we may remark as very surprising in the relation of the legislator's death, which is, that his body was not found after his death.

For we do not see that that people, which otherwise kept up and carried about with so much care, the bones of *Joseph* and his brethren, in order to bury and deposit them in the sepulchres of their ancestors (for both *Joseph* and his brethren were interred in *Judea*), did ever build a tomb to their law-giver, or so much as pretend to shew his sepulchre.

Josephus was of opinion that *Moses* wrote himself the account of his own death, for fear the *Jews* should ever imagine, and so give out, that God had taken him up into heaven. I see, I confess, no solidity in the conjecture of his; but yet it may give us occasion to make a reflection hereupon, I think, more natural and easy, which is, that God had in mind, as *Joshua* intimates it, to confirm the many characters of divinity that appeared in the law of *Moses*, by taking away from before the eyes of the *Jews* his corpse, which they would certainly, if they had not been so prevented, have kept with more care than those of all their patriarchs and kings. The description of the manner of *Moses's* death, shews evidently that he was not only in great esteem during his life, but that

When his death did much conduce to the increase of it, and to make men look upon him as one gloriously raised up above the common condition of men, and in a manner not obnoxious to the infirmities and miseries incident to human nature. But after these general reflexions, I must come to those that are more particular.

C H A P. III.

That the Truth of the Miracles related by MOSES cannot reasonably be doubted of.

WHOEVER will examine with attention the four last books of *Moses*, shall find in them several passages recorded, which deserve a particular consideration.

As, first of all, the miraculous birth, the extraordinary education, the heroical courage, and the Divine call and commission of *Moses*, and the several miracles which he wrought in *Egypt*, to bring the *Israelites* out of it, and lead them to the borders of *Canaan*.

Then, secondly, all the moral, ceremonial, and political laws, which *Moses* gave to that people from God.

And, lastly, *Moses's* prophecies concerning their future condition, their victories, their captivities, their transportations, concerning the destruction of *Jerusalem*, the coming of the *Messiah*, and the dispersion of their whole nation,

All which passages have as evident and authentic proofs of their certainty, as things of that nature are capable of.

Let us first begin with the narration of the miracles recorded in the beginning of *Exodus*.

Wherein we see, that after *Moses* had represented the death of *Joseph*, and of all the generation that came down with *Jacob* into *Egypt*, he relates his own history, and represents himself as another *Noah*, saved out of the waters, to save and deliver that holy family.

The whole relation which he makes of all those particulars, is very strange and extraordinary; but yet his circumcision, and the instruction of his mother, to whom he was given by the daughter of *Pharaoh*, to be nursed up; and the conversation of that prince's, who had adopted him, and made herself a proselyte, as the *Jews* endeavour to prove from *1 Chron. iv. 18 (q)*; and his education in the court of *Egypt*, and acquaintance with all the grandees of that court; did concur together to acquaint him with that remarkable preservation of his person, and to persuade him of the certainty of it.

For how could *Moses* either impose, or be imposed upon, in that matter? Was not that barbarous cruelty of the *Egyptians* by which they compelled the *Jews*, about the time of *Moses's* birth, to throw their chil-

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(q) *Talk. in h. l. ex Vajikra Rab.*

dren into the river *Nilus*, notoriously known of all men? Were not the public buildings, and strong cities, viz. *Pythom* and *Ramesis*, so called from the name of king *Rameses Miamum*, standing in the sight of all men? And was it not publicly known by all the world, that the poor *Israelites* were the slaves and drudges who were made use of to erect those buildings?

Neither could the manner of his education be unknown to him, nor yet to any of the *Hebrews*; for we do not join here to *Moses's* narration, what *Josephus* relates of his person, of his feats in *Meroe*, and of his marrying an *Æthiopian* princess, &c.

As *Moses's* miracles were done in the presence of the *Egyptians* and *Jews*, so they testify that he had really received his calling and commission from God in the desert; and that, just in the manner as he describes it himself.

Now, no man can dispute the truth of those miracles, if he but minds the following considerations.

First, it cannot be denied that the people of *Israel* was brought out of *Egypt* by *Moses*. Their law, which the present *Jews* do still observe, speaks every where of that famous action of his; there was never any man disputed the certainty of that achievement. All ancient authors make mention of it; *Manethon* (r) gives an account of the time, of the manner, and of many other principal circumstances of that exploit.

Trogus Pompeius, *Justinus*, and *Tacitus*, do also speak of it. Only *Tacitus* does groundlessly, I suppose, of his own head, relate, that the *Jews* were expelled out of *Egypt*, because of their leprosy: I say groundlessly, for it is known that on the contrary leprosy was a common distemper amongst the *Egyptians*, and that they infected the *Israelites* with it; so that there is no likelihood they should be expelled by the *Egyptians* for a distemper that they got from them.

We know, besides, that the law of *Moses* which calls the leprosy the distemper of *Egypt*, did banish the lepers out of the congregation of the people; and then the nature of *David's* curses against *Joab*, because of his murdering *Abner*, shews sufficiently that the leprosy was looked upon by the *Jews* as a distemper most commonly sent immediately from God. Nay, *Trogus Pompeius* (s) himself observes that the magicians caused *Moses*, with the people of *Israel*, to be expelled, because they themselves were struck with a kind of scab and itch; and that they were afraid lest the contagion of it should infect the whole kingdom of *Egypt* (t).

And here I must not forget the mentioning the testimony of *Numenius*, a *Pythagorean* philosopher, who relates that both *Jannes* and *Jambres* were chosen by the *Egyptians*, to oppose *Moses*, and hinder the effects of his miracles and prayers, which had brought down many grievous plagues upon *Egypt*, just about the time of the *Jews* banishment out of that country.

But secondly, if the leprosy which the *Israelites* brought from *Egypt*

(r) *Joseph contra App.* l. 1.

(s) *Justin.* l. 36.

(t) *Euseb. præp. Evang.* l. 9. c. 8.

be an indisputable proof of their sojourning there; it is as certain, that the going out of that mixed multitude of *Egyptians*, who so far espoused the *Israelites* interest, as to leave and forsake *Egypt*, their own country, to accompany them, could have no other cause or pretence than the miracles of *Moses*, whereof they had been eye-witnesses; so that the posterity of those *Egyptians* that were thus incorporated into the body of the people of *Israel*, were in after ages as so many witnesses of the truth of those miracles which formerly persuaded their fathers to join with *Moses*, and so to share fortune with the *Hebrews*.

Thirdly, it is certain, that the *Jews* could not so much as mention any of the miracles which they pretended were done formerly for the deliverance of their fathers, without exposing themselves to the scorn of all the world, if all those miracles, and their deliverance, had not been certainly and generally known to the *Egyptians*, and to all the neighbouring nations, by whom they were often subdued and brought into subjection after the decease of *Moses* and *Joshua*.

To all these reflexions we may add, that the commemoration of the *Israelites* going out of *Egypt*, with all the miracles wrought by *Moses*, was renewed yearly, not only by the solemnizing the feast of the passover, which the *Israelites* did constantly keep to the time of their dispersion, and which they do still keep in all parts of the world, but also by two very sensible ways.

The first whereof, was the separation which God made of the tribe of *Levi*, in order to consecrate it to his service, instead of the first-born of the people of *Israel*, whom he had spared and preserved in *Egypt*, with great solemnity, in regard both of men and beasts, as we read, *Numb.* iii. so that every *Levite* was as a living memorial of that great miracle, wrought at the *Israelites* going out of *Egypt*.

And the second was the law concerning the redemption of every first-born, both of men and unclean beasts (*u*); which is observed to this hour among the *Jews*. It is clear and evident, that there is in all those laws, a deep impression of those several great miracles which compelled *Pharaoh* to let the *Israelites* go.

Lastly, it is very observable here, that the memory of the deliverance of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, wrought, as by many miracles, so especially by the death of the first-born of *Egypt*, which was the occasion of the institution of the passover, continued amongst the *Egyptians* till after *Jesus Christ*: for till then they used to mark with red their sheep, their trees, their houses, and lands, the day before the passover, as any one may see in *Epiphanius*; which custom could proceed from no other cause, than from the *Egyptians* fear of the like plague and mortality that was once inflicted upon their forefathers, and from their hope of preventing it by such a kind of talisman whereby they thought *Moses* had formerly saved the *Israelites* harmless from that great plague, only by sprinkling the blood of the lamb of the passover on the upper door-post of their houses.

(*u*) *Numb.* xviii. 16.

C H A P. IV.

A Continuation of the Proofs of the Truth of the Miracles wrought by MOSES.

THESE arguments might be thought sufficient for the evincing the truth of these miracles which *Moses* relates; but yet something more may be added.

As those stupendous miracles by which the famous deliverance of the *Israelites* was effected, could not be doubted of by those who had been eye-witnesses of them; so they were afterwards confirmed by several other miracles, which, being as great, and almost of the same kind, continued for many years in the sight of the whole people of *Israel*.

God made a pillar of fire, and of a cloud, attend upon the *Israelites*, to guide them, the one by day, and the other by night. He divided the Red Sea, to open a passage through it for his people; the memory whereof (saith *Eusebius*) was preserved to his time, by those of *Memphis* (x): the *Israelites* took the spoils of the *Egyptians* drowned in the Red Sea, as they were pursuing them: they made a song upon the occasion of that wonderful deliverance; they were fed with *manna*, a kind of heavenly and miraculous food; they drank of that brook of water that was following them wherever they went. All those miracles, with many others, continued for forty years together without any interruption, and do therefore firmly establish the truth of those other miracles which *Moses* relates, because there were none of them wherein the people could be imposed upon by any trick or illusion, and of the truth whereof every one could not satisfy himself, by his own experience.

I do not speak now of several public monuments of those miracles; as, for example, the rod of *Aaron* which blossomed in a night; the *manna* which was kept in the tabernacle; the brazen serpent, which, having continued to *Hezekiah's* time, was broken down by him, only because the people offered incense to it.

From all which it must be acknowledged, that there was in the whole series of the *Jewish* history, both many pregnant evidences of the truth of the first miracles, and a constant series of miracles which, having been foretold by *Moses*, did the better confirm the truth of those which he relates as done by him on purpose to vindicate and defend the liberty and honour of the people of *Israel*.

Because I did just now intimate that the memory of the *Jewish* deliverance did continue for many ages after amongst the *Egyptians*, I think myself obliged to add here some arguments, to prove that neither such a transaction as that was, nor yet any of the like nature and importance, could ever be forgotten in the land of *Canaan*.

There is nothing that in outward appearance seems more ridiculous, than what is related concerning the *Gibeonites* coming to *Joshua's* camp; their equipage shewed that they had a mind to persuade the *Israelites* that they

(x) L. 9. præp. Ev. cap. ult.

they came from a far country. The treaty which they extorted from *Joshua* by fraud, is very singular.

And there can be nothing more remarkable than their subsistence amongst the people of *Israel*, notwithstanding that they were of the number of those nations which God had commanded to be destroyed; and their being destined, by *Joshua's* appointment, to carry the wood and the water necessary for the service of the tabernacle, from whence they were denominated *Nethinims*, and thereby for ever after distinguished from the *Israelites*.

But after all, there could be nothing more agreeable to God's wisdom, than the preservation of that people amongst the *Israelites*. Their fathers were the witnesses of *Moses* and *Joshua's* miracles. Those miracles obliged them to seek the alliance of the *Hebrews*, and to cheat them into it by a fraudulent treaty, because they despaired of compassing their design by any other means. Therefore their subsisting amongst the *Jews*, and their servile office which exposed them to the eyes of the whole nation, could not choose but be of an extraordinary use, to make that people preserve and cherish up the memory of those glorious actions which every *Gibeonite* had perpetually before his eyes.

The same remark may be made upon the continuing of *Rahab's* family amongst the *Israelites*, after the destruction of *Jericho*.

It is certain that the *Jews* have always believed, that, besides those first miracles related by *Moses*, many others have been done since for their sakes, both to possess them of the land of *Canaan*, and to keep it before them to the possession of it: nay, of those latter miracles many are very like unto the former; as, for example, the death of 185000 men in the army of *Sennacherib*; the returning of the shadow backwards ten degrees upon the sun-dial of *Ahaz*; the wonderful preservation of the whole nation by the means of *Esther*, which was the occasion of the institution of the feast of *Purim* amongst them; and several other miraculous transactions related in the *Jewish* authors, of which I will only name three, which did preserve the memory of the greatest and most important miracles related by *Moses*.

The first is the continual miracle of the *Urim* and *Thummim* of the high-priest, which by its frequency did confirm the truth of *Moses's* relation concerning the several apparitions of God, in order to lead his people, and to give them laws.

The second is the miracle of every seventh year (y), during which, though the people of *Israel* did neither sow nor reap, God, according to his promise, did supply them with plenty of provisions, by making every sixth year extraordinarily plentiful. Now this miracle was a kind of a memorial of that other great miracle whereby God did feed his people with manna for forty years together in the desert, still doubling the proportion of manna every sixth day.

In effect, as that law which commanded a sabbath of rest unto the land every seventh year, was constantly observed, which would never have been done long if that people had not always been fully convinced, by their own experience, of its divinity; and again, as that miracle was publicly known, that God by his Prophets did often threaten the

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Jews to deprive them of the fertility of the sixth year, because of their transgressing the sabbath; so it is plain, that no man can reasonably doubt, or dispute the truth of that continual miracle which that law both supposeth and promiseth.

The third is the miracle of a continual protection during the time of those great solemn feasts in which the people were obliged by God's command to attend his service in the tabernacle or at *Jerusalem*. For this law requiring attendance from all the *Jews* of the age of twenty and upwards, it engaged them to leave the frontiers of their country naked and destitute of men, and so exposed to the inroads of their enemies; but at the same time it gave them occasion to experience the same Divine protection which, as they had read in *Moses's* writings, their fathers had formerly so often experienced against all their enemies.

It is certain that there was never any commonwealth in the world which had any such fundamental law; the danger to which a country is exposed by the observation of it, is too visible not to be avoided. Therefore the *Jews*, to be sure, would never have acknowledged that law to be Divine, nor yet submitted to it, if they had not been secure of God's protection to prevent all the mischiefs and inconveniences that might arise from their observation of that law: so that, suppose they had been at first so stupid and unwary as to receive it from *Moses*, yet they would never have observed it so constantly and so long, if they had not had a constant trial of God's protection on all occasions; and if they had not looked upon it as a necessary consequence and accomplishment of the promises which he had made both to them and their fathers.

However, it is certain, that it was the will of God that the *Jews* should altogether rely upon that miraculous protection of his: nay, the distrusting of it was so offensive to him, that he inflicted an exemplary punishment upon *David*, for an action which, thought innocent of itself in a prince, did yet directly contradict that trust which the *Israelites* were bound to set upon God's protection; for when *David* caused the people to be numbered, God sent a pestilence amongst his people, which abated his pride, and thus taught him effectually to rely more upon God for the future, than upon the multitude of his people.

C H A P. V.

That MOSES's Description of the Manner of God's giving him his Law, is evidently true.

IT is also equally easy to shew the truth of *Moses's* description of the manner of the promulgation of God's law in the desert, and of the several parts of it, moral, political, ceremonial.

I shall not stand to consider here the admirable equity, and most absolute perfection of the moral law, and shew that it could have no other

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author but God alone; neither will I urge, in this place, the extraordinary care God had to regulate the most minute ceremonies, that there might be nothing left undetermined in all the acts of religion; as also the great and Divine wisdom that is discernible in all those ceremonial laws, which, besides their useful opposition to the then *Pagan* customs, do most of them either mind men of their duty, or represent and typify the things that were to come to pass under the Gospel.

In short, I will not aggravate any farther the consideration of the admirable wisdom that appears every where in the whole body of the political laws which God gave to the *Jews*, to settle them into a firm and solid form of government; that wisdom is such, and so visible, that it plainly demonstrates the divinity of them to any man that will but compare the whole body of them, and their absolute perfection, with the defects of all human laws, and the several changes and alterations they have received from time to time.

But I shall lay aside these remarks, and choose to come to those that do not require so much learning, nor so great an intention of thought.

The first of which is, that the moral law was given in the sight and hearing of all the people of *Israel*, and that the promulgation of it, upon mount *Sinai*, was accompanied with extraordinary marks of glory, and made only after many previous purifications prescribed to the whole congregation in order to receive it.

It is true, indeed, the ceremonial laws which were annexed to it, were not delivered to the people with so much pomp and majesty; but as they were also given in the same desert, and in the presence of the elders of the people assembled together near the tabernacle, after they had earnestly intreated *Moses* that God would no more speak to them himself, it is evident that they are no less authentic than the moral law: therefore we see that they were accordingly received by that people, notwithstanding the troubles, expences, avocations, straights, and hardships, which they might meet with by it.

Now is it in the least probable, that if this people had not been convinced that *Moses* did really familiarly converse with God for forty days and forty nights upon mount *Sinai*, they would foolishly, without any cause, of a sudden have submitted to such a troublesome yoke of laws, many whereof were opposite both to their opinions and ancient customs?

It is well known, for example, what jealousy there was all along amongst the tribes of *Israel*, even from the time of their ancestors; yet we do not see that in those laws there is any notice taken of it, or regard had to it, but that on the contrary they seem to foment that spirit of division, when they deprive *Reuben* of his birthright, in favour of *Joseph's* posterity, and of the priesthood in favour of *Levi*, and of the kingdom in favour of *Judah*.

Nay, we see, that even after *Moses* had composed the difference that was once betwixt the tribe of *Levi* and the followers of *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, they were hardly brought to acquiesce to his decision; and how could he then possibly have raised his own tribe, the tribe of *Levi*, to such prerogatives, and to such a plentiful condition above all the other tribes, as he did, by assigning the first fruits and offerings to the Levites and

and priests—how could he, I say, have done that without meeting with some opposition from the rest of the people, except they had all been convinced, by the miracle that God wrought to decide that question, when it was disputed, that he himself was the author of that constitution.

Thus we read, that long after, when king *Uzziah* boldly presumed to act against *Moses's* law, *Numb. xxv.* and to assume himself the dignity of priesthood, and to do the functions of it, he presently received the punishment due to his presumption; so that, being struck with a sudden leprosy, he was confined to his dying day. Is it any ways probable that a prince, especially of his temper, would have submitted to such a confinement, and meekly resigned his crown to his son, if that punishment inflicted upon him had not fully convinced him of the divinity of that law which he had transgressed and violated by his temerity and presumption?

The third reflexion is, that the greatest part of those laws being intended by God to inspire his people with an irreconcilable aversion against all those nations amongst whom they were going to settle, they were so framed, as not only to be opposite to the laws and customs of *Egypt*, from whence they came, but also to those received amongst the *Hivites*, *Ammorites*, and other nations, of whose countries they were going to possess themselves.

Thus we find in the xviiith of *Leviticus*, laws against all incestuous marriages, which, without doubt, were ordinary amongst the *Canaanites* and *Egyptians*, who therein followed the examples of the ancient Patriarchs, who married within those forbidden degrees: there we find also the sacrifices to *Moloch* forbidden, the practice whereof, those nations, in all likelihood, defended by the example of *Abraham's* sacrifice.

Now, it cannot reasonably be thought that a whole nation would of a sudden receive such laws as deprived them of a liberty and freedom they had always hitherto enjoyed, and condemn of their own accord those sacrifices that had the fairest pretence of religion imaginable, and to use many ceremonies contrary to those received amongst them, if they had not a strong and extraordinary motive for so doing.

There is another thing, besides, that challenges our consideration, viz. the exact description which God gave to *Moses* of the tabernacle, of the several parts of the ceremonial worship which was to be performed in that sacred place, and of the manner how this tabernacle, with all its appurtenances, utensils, and ornaments, was finished.

For as this tabernacle was then the center of the whole *Jewish* religion, (as the temple was afterwards by succeeding to it) so it was a solemn proof of the divinity of *Moses's* laws, and of the worship that was performed there.

Is it conceivable, that a whole nation should contribute to the building of it, should see it consecrated, and taken to pieces, and set together again every day, and should read all the particulars relating to its construction, and not discern whether there was any truth and reality in all that was told them concerning the religion which their governor fixed in that place wherein he pretended many revelations were made?

C H A P. VI.

Some other Proofs that confirm MOSES's Description of the Manner how the Law was given and promulgated.

BUT if it is so easy to establish the divinity of the Law of *Moses*, by shewing the truth of the matter of fact, according to the manner of God's promulgation, as *Moses* relates it, we may further collect the truth of it, by joining these following reflexions to those already made in the foregoing chapters.

Certainly if *Moses* had been the first founder of a kingdom, and had been succeeded in it by his own children and posterity for many generations one after another, we might perhaps have had some grounds to suspect that his successors, consulting their own interest and honour, would have been very glad to persuade their subjects, that the first founder of their kingdom had some communication with God, and that it was from him he received the laws and constitutions which he gave them concerning civil and religious matters.

But it is observable, that *Moses* was so far from investing his own children with the supreme authority after himself, that he translated it into another tribe, and constituted *Joshua*, of the tribe of *Ephraim*, for his successor in the government: as for his posterity, he took little care of it, but reduced it to a rank inferior to that of *Aaron's* family, which he preferred to the most honourable functions of the priesthood, leaving to his own the meanest and most inconsiderable employments: all which shews evidently that none of those who came after *Moses* were moved, by any private interest of their own, to defend the truth and authority of his laws and writings, but only by the certain knowledge they had, that they were all divine.

Neither ought we to omit to consider here the manner how *Moses* decides beforehand such questions, and determines such controversies, as could not be raised but after the conquest of *Canaan*, which was made by his successor only after his death; and how those laws were constantly observed in all the succeeding generations of that people, and submitted unto by the very judges and kings themselves; though there be nothing more common than for a conqueror, such as *Joshua* was, to admit of no other fundamental laws in that state he is the founder of, than those which he is the author of. Nothing is more usual, than for statesmen to affect the exposing the conduct of their predecessors, especially when the form of government is altered, and from democratical, or aristocratical, is changed into monarchical, as it happened amongst the *Israelites*. How then could *Moses's* laws still keep up their authority in all changes and revolutions? How comes it to pass, that in all the successions of judges and kings, there was never any of them attempted to suspend or annul *Moses's* laws, much less to enact and give any others contrary to them?

Again, how came it to pass, that, in all the divisions and factions that nation fell into, there was never any *Jew* endeavoured, with any success, to undeceive the rest of his own people, so as to make them shake off the troublesome yoke of *Moses's* laws? No doubt, only because the generality of that nation never disputed the divine origin and authority of them.

It were an easy thing to demonstrate, by the whole series of the *Jewish* history, that all those laws which in *Moses's* writings are inlayed one within another, and represented as occasioned by several transactions related there, have all been equally received of the *Jews*, and have all been put together in a body by themselves before *Moses's* death, as it may be proved out of the xxxist of *Deuteronomy*.

It appears, that those laws were public, and in great esteem amongst that people to whom God gave them, upon whom he laid an indispensable obligation to read them every day, and to consult them upon every emergent business.

It appears, that they were known equally of all degrees of men, sexes, and ages, which were all obliged to pay obedience to them upon pain of death.

It appears, that those laws were not only publicly kept in the tabernacle, but also privately read in every family.

We see that a whole tribe, viz. the tribe of *Levi*, was appointed by God to explain them; and in order to that, they were dispersed throughout the whole land of *Canaan*, and exempted from the cares and troubles that necessarily attend husbandry, by the plentiful provision of tithes and offerings that was allotted to them.

We see that God obliged all *Jews* to read and meditate upon them continually, especially every sabbath-day.

Nay, and we see moreover, that God every seventh year would have them read publicly in a more solemn manner, before the whole congregation of that people, who during that year were obliged to rest from all their ordinary labours and employments, and so had nothing else to do, all that while, but to read the law, to examine it, and to meditate upon it.

Lastly, it appears, that those laws were yet the more solemn and authentic, because they obliged the *Jews* to celebrate three such feasts as were to be publicly kept by the whole nation, and consequently apt to refresh their memories, and put them in mind, thrice a year, not only of the surprising miracles that God had done them, but also of the manner how he gave and promulgated his laws; the miracles giving rise to the laws, and those laws being themselves a means of preserving the memory of those miracles, because of the frequent commemoration of them which was therein enjoined.

Now these things being so, let every one judge, whether the truth of *Moses's* account of God's giving, and promulgating by his means, that body of laws which he hath inserted in *Exodus*, and the following books, can possibly, or at least reasonably, be disputed, or doubted of. But come now to consider the oracles recorded in *Moses's* writings, in order to demonstrate the truth and divinity of them.

C H A P. VII.

That there is no just Exception can be against MOSES's History, in what relates to the Oracles which he hath recorded in his Books.

THERE are several sorts of Oracles in *Exodus*, and the other three following Books.

First, there are some whereof the accomplishment did soon follow the prediction.

The deliverance of the *Jews* out of the *Egyptian* bondage is of that number; *Moses* does promise and foretel it; nay, and he executed it himself: and all the people to whom it was promised and foretold, were themselves witnesses of the accomplishment of that prophecy; and it was that accomplishment which established the divinity of his commission.

So is the other prophecy concerning the conquest of the land of *Canaan*, and the several divisions that were to be made of it amongst all the tribes of *Israel*, *Moses* foretelling exactly what lot every one should have, and giving, besides, a description of the country that every tribe was to inhabit.

Those that were born in the desert were witnesses both of the prediction and the execution of it, although it was by the casting of lots that all the tribes got their several partitions.

But, secondly, there are some other oracles in *Moses's* books, the accomplishment whereof was not to follow the prediction till after a long interval of time.

Such are the prophecies that foretel the future subjection of the *Israelites* to the *Canaanites*, and the several deliverances out of that subjection, which God was to effect by the hands of judges, whom he was to raise up for that purpose.

Such again are the prophecies which relate to the future change of their commonwealth into a kingly government.

Thirdly, and lastly, we see that *Moses* foretells all the accidents, changes, and revolutions, that were to befall the *Jews*, as long as their state should stand: at least, we see that his predictions are very plain, concerning their several captivities and removals, and their return into the holy land; as also the sieges of *Samaria* and *Jerusalem*; and the recoverable dispersion of the whole nation, which we see at present.

But whatever difference there may otherwise be betwixt all these predictions, we may say, that every one of them hath as pregnant proofs of its certainty and truth, as any thing of that nature is capable of.

For first, as to the first sort of predictions, the accomplishment whereof *Moses* relates himself,

It plainly appears, that his account cannot in the least be suspected of imposture; because he wrote it amongst a whole nation, which could not possibly be imposed upon in that case, seeing he supposes, and takes it

it for granted, all along in his relation, that those predictions were beforehand publicly and generally known of all the people.

As for the accomplishment of the second sort of prophecies, we have the relation of it in such other books as were written after *Moses's* death, as in the books of *Joshua*, of *Judges*, and several others, which relate the accomplishment of them, as of prophecies written many years, and even some ages before, by *Moses*.

Besides, to this we may add, that the account which we find in those books, concerning the accomplishment of *Moses's* prophecies, is interwoven with such histories as suppose, without any affectation, that his prophecies, as well as his writings, were in the hands of all the world, and distinctly known by every *Jew*.

And what is further observable, is, that the *Jews* have always had *Moses's* books in such an esteem, because of these several illustrious prophecies that are contained in them, that they have always looked upon him as the most excellent of all their prophets. They assert, this very day, that the other prophets had commonly no other knowledge of future events than that which was communicated to them by dreams and visions; whereas *Moses* had it by an immediate revelation of God himself, who used to speak to him face to face, without any enthusiasm, when he was perfectly awake.

Now, how could ever the *Jews* have been so strongly prepossessed in that high opinion both of *Moses* and his predictions, if we suppose that they never saw the accomplishment of any of them?

That would certainly be as strange an illusion as ever was: for it is besides observable, that those prophecies of his were not written by themselves, and kept secret from the generality of the people; but that they were inserted into the several speeches which he made to all the people some time before his death; and which are written, and kept together in the same volume, to be a standing monument, both of his prophecies, and of his ministry among the *Jews*.

Now there is a vast difference betwixt a book that is all made up of prophecies, and so kept secret, and seldom read, as the books of the Sybils were, and a book wherein the prophecies it contains are interwoven with a history wherein there is so great a variety of matters, and draws to it and fixes the attention of every reader, and wherein they are mingled with a whole body of political and ceremonial laws, and intermixed with the accounts which *Moses* gives of all the great transactions which gave the occasion to so many several revelations and prophecies recorded in his books.

I am persuaded that it is impossible for any man to make those reflexions upon the opinion which the *Jews* entertained of *Moses's* prerogative, and upon the manner that his prophecies, so much revered amongst them, were exactly accomplished, and not be convinced of their Divine authority.

C H A P. VIII.

That the Testimony of the JEWS is a constant Proof of the Truth of the Oracles related by MOSES.

BUT lest any body should think it strange that I should build the truth of *Moses's* prophecies upon the testimony of the *Jews*, I will restrain its authority of it within just and certain bounds.

First, although the *Jews* bear witness, in their sacred books, that the greatest part of *Moses's* prophecies are already fulfilled, yet they say some are not; as, for instance, those which relate to the Messiah's coming. But their obstinate blindness is not a just prejudice against such an important truth; to be convinced of which, we need only to compare *Moses's* words with the actions of Jesus Christ.

Thus, for what relates to the destruction of *Jerusalem*, we need only compare *Moses's* prophecy of it, with the description *Josephus*, their own historian, hath made of the same in his history of the siege and ruin of that city, and of the dissipation of all the nations of the *Jews*.

But without the *Jews* testimony, in what regards the accomplishment of those prophecies whereof the execution was deferred for a very long time, it is easy to convince any the most incredulous man of their truth and divinity, if he please but to make this one reflexion, which is, that when *Moses* relates amongst the oracles of the Patriarch *Jacob*, a particular prophecy concerning the Messiah's coming, and when he mentions that of *Balaam* concerning the rising of that Divine Star, he subjoins also at the same time that concerning the vocation of the Gentiles to the faith, and brings it in as a certain sign and consequence of the Messiah's being come into the world.

Now, if we examine the meaning of *Moses's* predictions about the vocation of the Gentiles, which the Prophets that came after him did later explain and illustrate, we shall be apt from thence to conclude, that he in effect foretold that God in the days of the Messiah would follow quite another method than that which he had used before until the time of *Moses*, viz.

That whereas God might seem to restrain then the privilege of his covenant, to one people alone; which was in effect to restrain the honour of the Messiah's birth to one sole nation of the world, to one sole tribe of that nation, to one sole family of that tribe, to one sole branch of that family, and so to one sole person of that branch; he would (after the Messiah's coming) take a contrary method, and call all men to salvation unto him.

Now that being supposed, the truth of all *Moses's* prophecies cannot be questioned. And whatever the *Jews* opinion be concerning the accomplishment of some of them, it is sufficient for us, that they have carefully and faithfully preserved the books wherein those prophecies which we see so exactly fulfilled, are contained.

For we cannot reasonably suspect *Moses*, or any other *Jew*, of forging

the prophecies which foretold the calling of the Gentiles: not *Moses*, seeing all his laws do tend (as I shall shew hereafter more at large) to establish that restriction I was just now speaking of, which was to continue to the Messiah's coming: not the *Jews*, seeing that none of them can still endure to hear of the removal of that restriction, by the calling of the Gentiles; and that they are all possessed with such a spirit of envy and jealousy against all other nations, that they perfectly hate and abominate them. But besides, we cannot desire a better, nor a more authentic accomplishment of those oracles, which are so opposite to the *Jewish* principles and prejudices, than that which we ourselves are witnesses of.

The same reflexion belongs to the other prophecies of *Moses* concerning the total dissipation of the *Jewish* state; as also to the dreadful accomplishment of them in our days. The most resolved obstinacy can suggest but one objection in this matter, which is, that either the Christians or the Jews have falsified *Moses's* writings, and inserted those prophecies which we now find there, concerning the vocation of the Gentiles, and the dispersion of the *Jews*, after those things were come to pass.

But first, the books of *Moses*, which both Christians and *Jews* have, are written in Hebrew, and penned in such a style as evidences their antiquity, and as would be inimitable now.

Secondly, that these books have been all translated into Greek, almost 300 years before Jesus Christ, and about 350 years before the destruction of *Jerusalem*. Neither the *Jews*, nor yet the Christians, were any longer sole masters of them, when the heathens had them also in their hands.

Besides, those who were converted to Christianity from Judaism and Heathenism, did not only find these prophecies of *Moses* in the hands of *Jews* and Heathens, long before the conversion of the Gentiles, and the destruction of *Jerusalem*, but did also make use of them to evince against the *Jews*, that the Messiah was already come.

Thus, I think, I have sufficiently demonstrated the truth and divinity of all *Moses's* prophecies which we find in *Exodus* and the following books.

C H A P. IX.

That it appears, by the Nature of his Relations, that MOSES had the Mission in View when he wrote the Book of GENESIS.

I HAVE shewed, in my former reflexions upon *Genesis*, that those who lived before *Moses's* time, had a distinct knowledge that God would certainly raise up a deliverer amongst them, although they were not certain of the manner of his appearance; and I have besides, I think, sufficiently

sufficiently proved, that the various ideas which the ancients entertained of him upon the first promise made by God of his coming, were the occasion of several criminal actions committed by the Patriarchs, and by those of other nations who had the same pretensions with them.

I am now to prove that *Moses* himself had the same knowledge, and lived in the same expectation with the ancients that preceded him. It is of more importance to be shewn, and that henceforth nobody may wonder, if I pretend that the greatest part of the laws he gave to the *Jews*, both in reference to civil and religious matters, and the greatest part of his prophecies, as also those others mentioned by Prophets that lived after him in that *Jewish* commonwealth, do all suppose a distinct relation to the promised Messiah.

And to make this evident, I beg leave to offer to the reader's consideration some general reflexions upon *Moses's* history in *Genesis*.

First, it cannot be denied that *Moses* was one of the greatest and wisest historians that ever was: there cannot be a greater design, nor a more difficult task than his was, to write the history of 2400 years: he gives an account of the creation of the world in general; and in particular, of that of a man, of his sin, of the promise God made him after the fall, of the flood, of the original of all the nations that were in his time.

His way and manner of writing is also very extraordinary: the majesty of his stile is tempered with an admirable plainness; he describes all sorts of passions, to the life; he is admirable in his characters of the men he speaks of, and of God himself. To be convinced of this, let any man read his description of *Abraham's* sacrifice, and of the several passions *Joseph* and his brethren were moved and affected with, when he made himself known to them. Besides all that, we may observe two very surprising things in the book of *Genesis*.

The first is, that *Moses* recites there such things as seem to be unworthy to be taken notice of, by so grave and wise a historian as he was: he gives, for instance, an exact and particular account of all the circumstances of *Abraham's* purchase of the cave of *Machpelah*, for a burying-place for his wife; he sets down all the particulars of the incest of *Judah* with *Thamar*; and he relates the manner how *Leah* with her sons mandrakes obtained leave of *Rachel* to enjoy her husband for one night, with a surprising exactness.

The other is, that *Moses* records a whole series of horrible crimes, which seem to be as so many blemishes and odious reflexions upon the memory of those whose history he writes.

Now it is not reasonable to suppose that *Moses*, being so prudent as he is confessed to be, could have been so injudicious as to choose and pick out such passages and actions as are in themselves either trivial and of no moment, or horrible and odious, to fill up with them a book wherein he gives a description of the creation of the world, where he sets down the oracles of God at every turn.

It is natural therefore to judge, that he had some particular prospect in his eyes, which could be no other than that of the promise, which alone justifies his recital of trivial things, and of crimes, in such a serious history as his is.

I shall not repeat here what I have already observed upon the crimes which he relates in *Genesis*; I add only, that he had the same design and prospect in his narration of such small and inconsiderable transactions.

Thus, by his account of the purchase of the cave of *Macpelah*, his intention was to shew how God intended, by this sepulchre, to assure *Abraham*, and his posterity after him, to the land of *Canaan*: his scope and prospect was the same when he records the burial of *Rahab* in *Ephrathah*.

As for the crimes *Moses* relates, I have before proved, that he designed thereby to shew how all the faithful before his time had their minds altogether taken up with the thoughts and hopes of the accomplishment of the promise: and herein, we may say, the wisdom of *Moses* is very conspicuous and discernable in the choice he made of those actions, to perpetuate the memory of the excessive desire which the ancients had to accomplish the promise.

And let no man object here, that it is very strange to see, that during so many ages the promise of the Messiah occasioned no other than wicked actions; for as it appears, by all circumstances, that those crimes related by *Moses* were committed in different times, and long after one another, so it is plain that he hath recorded those actions on purpose to shew what impression the true knowledge of the promise of the Messiah made upon the mind of those that had it in its perfection and integrity.

If *Moses* had inserted in this book of *Genesis* any long discourse made by *Adam* about that matter upon a sabbath-day, or if he had given us a relation of what such an one as *Seth*, or *Enoch*, or *Sem*, used to teach concerning that promise in their religious assemblies; it is certain, that, besides the inconvenience of a tedious repetition which he must have made of the same things in every particular account he gives of the several generations that preceded him, he could never have persuaded his readers so well as he may do now.

First, men would have been apt to suspect that those speeches upon the promise of the Messiah were of his own making, and like those barbarous we find in *Xenophon* or *Livy*.

Secondly, the crimes that were committed, to get thereby some advantage: as, for instance, the murder of a king committed by his heir, and successor to the crown, shews in the murderer a much greater ambition, and affectation of the throne, and supposes in him a distinct and clear knowledge of his rights and pretensions to the empire,

C H A P. X.

That the same Persuasion appears throughout the whole Conduct of MOSES, until his Death.

BUT it is not only by those and the like reflexions which may be made upon the choice *Moses* hath made of the things which he receives, that we may gather that he had always the promise of the Messiah in view; for he being descended from *Abraham*, there is no doubt but that, from his youth up, he was brought up in the religion, and consequently in the hopes, of that Patriarch.

But moreover we have reason to think, that the idea of this promise of the Messiah was much more lively and strong in that family, ever since *Jacob* on his death-bed had foretold and promised to *Judah*, that it was out of his tribe he was to be born. As for *Joseph*, to whom that promise might have been applied by the children of *Israel*, because of his power and glory in *Egypt*; the *Egyptian* persecution that followed some time after his decease, resolved all scruples and mistakes that might otherwise have been entertained in that matter, and so convinced all those poor sufferers, that their Messiah was as yet to come.

To all these strong presumptions, whereby we may guess what the thoughts of *Moses* might be concerning the promise of the Messiah, we may add the consideration both of his words and actions, which do very plainly establish the same truth.

St. Paul, in his epistle to the *Hebrews* (2), mentions two particular actions of *Moses*, which, as they challenge our admiration, so they deserve our serious consideration, because they clearly, I think, evidence that *Moses* was fully persuaded of the future accomplishment of that promise.

The first is, that he refused to be called the son of *Pharaoh's* daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in *Egypt*, for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward. From whence could a resolution so opposite to the ordinary prudence and natural inclinations of other men proceed in him, if it was not, as *St. Paul* observes it, from a very extraordinary source, viz. from that strong persuasion which he had, that how calamitous soever the then present condition of the people of God might be, yet God had chosen it therein to accomplish that great promise which was the joy of all their ancestors from *Adam* down to them, the remembrance whereof he renewed, by illustrating those oracles which *Jacob* pronounced upon his death-bed?

The other is, that *Moses* always adhered to that miserable people, and stood by them in all their calamities and pressures. It is true, he left them, and retired once into *Midian*, to save his life, and avoid the king's indignation; but he returned to them into *Egypt*, as soon he had received

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(2) Heb. xi.

his commission from God, to deliver them out of their misery and bondage: now he shewed again, by so doing, that he had a certain knowledge of that great promise of God made to that people, and a full assurance and persuation of its future accomplishment.

Moses informs us indeed, how he refused at first the commission God gave him to deliver his people from the *Egyptian* slavery, and how he excused himself upon his own incapacity, and being unfit for so a great an undertaking: but yet he makes at the same time so visible an allusion to the prophecy concerning the *Shiloh* (i. e. sent), *O my Lord* (said he, to God) *send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send*, that he could hardly express and declare his mind about it more plainly.

But we shall be the better convinced of his allusion to the sending of the *Shiloh*, if we reflect upon *Moses's* being of the tribe of *Levi*, of which God had pronounced nothing concerning the future accomplishment of the promise; he could not be ignorant of his being himself excluded of that privilege; and that, after all, what glory soever the miraculous preservation and illustrious beginnings of his life might seem to pretend and promise to him, yet he could not expect to rise much higher than *Joseph* had done before him, although he would reassume the former post to which his adoption by *Pharaoh's* daughter had once raised him.

We see that *Moses* continued always of the same mind, and entertained still the same notion and hopes of the promise of the Messiah, even after God had revealed to him, that the time of his appearing into the world was not yet come: this, I say, we see by his speech to the people of *Israel*, related in the eighteenth chapter of *Deuteronomy*, *The Lord thy God* (saith he to them) *will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me, unto him you shall hearken*: he does not say a priest, or a king, though the Messiah was to be both; but he saith, a Prophet to teach them not to mistake any of their priests or kings for the Messiah, but to expect and regard less, in his person, the external honour of *Aaron's* family, and the worldly grandeur of kings, than the privilege of Divine inspiration, which was absolutely necessary to him as the founder of the true religion.

C H A P. XI.

That BALAAM's Prophecy, which MOSES relates, is a further Argument of the same Persuasion in him.

AS we ought to shew that *Moses* had a very clear and distinct knowledge of this promise, so, I think, it will not be amiss to make here a particular reflexion upon what he relates *Numb. xxiij.*

The *Moabites* being descended from *Lot's* eldest daughter, it is very natural to conceive, that *Balac* their king was so desirous to have the

Israelites cursed from God, and by one of his prophets only, because he designed thereby to secure himself of the divine blessing; or, which is the same thing, of the privilege of the accomplishment of the promise, to which he thought he had a just claim and pretension by his being one of *Lot's* posterity.

And this observation upon *Balac's* pretension and action, is the more just and well grounded, because the notion of the curse which he intended to have had pronounced against the *Israelites* is directly opposite to the terms of the promise which God made to *Abraham*, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*; which words, as I observed before, do import a direct opposition to *Lot's* pretension.

Now all this being supposed, one needs only consider the terms of the prophecy spoken by *Balaam* in favour of *Jacob*, to see that *Moses* hath related it, only to shew,

First, that although those neighbouring nations to *Judea* had degenerated, and corrupted themselves much by their communication with *Ham's* posterity, yet they preserved a strong, though confused notion of their ancestors pretensions, and acted according to that prejudice of theirs in all matters and occurrences of great moment.

Secondly, that it might be an authentic determination of all the several contests and pretensions which had divided the posterity of *Terah* until that time.

It is like a definitive sentence; first, in favour of *Abraham*, against the *Moabites* and *Ammonites*, who were descended from *Lot*; secondly, in favour of *Isaac*, against the pretension of the *Ismaelites*, descended from *Ismael*; thirdly, in favour of *Jacob*, against the pretension of the *Edomites*, descended from *Esau*.

For when he foretels that there shall come a star out of *Jacob*, he decides the three forementioned controversies; *Jacob* having been preferred to *Esau*, *Isaac* to *Ismael*, and *Abraham* to *Lot*. Now *Jacob* could not be preferred to the *Moabites*, but he must be so too to the *Ammonites*, *Ismaelites*, and *Edomites*.

This prophecy, as any one may see, is absolutely necessary, because it resolves all the questions and controversies which did excite so many jealousies amongst all those neighbouring nations.

This oracle of *Balaam* is yet the more remarkable, because, that notwithstanding it was pronounced at the entry into *Canaan*, the possessing and inhabiting of which country was one of the chiefest characters of the *Israelites* distinction from all other nations, yet in it *Balaam* makes a very distinct mention of the future calling of the Gentiles to the faith; he calls them the children of *Seth*, to intimate that in the time of the *Messiah*, the restriction made and observed by God before that time, was then to cease, and that there should be no more distinction betwixt the *Jews* and Gentiles, who were all the children of *Noah*, and all equally descended from *Seth* by him, because then all nations were to be called to the communion of the *Messiah*.

I know that some, by the children of *Seth*, understand the inhabitants of a certain town in the country of *Moab*, mentioned in the xvth of *Isaiah*, according to the Septuagint.

But the *Arabian* interpreter of the *Samaritans* (a) brings very good arguments to prove, that that place of Scripture is to be understood of the Messiah, and shews that he is called the head of the children of *Seth*, because *Seth* was the head and common father of all men since the flood, and at the same time of all the faithful before the flood; and that those words of *Genesis* iv. 26. *Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord, relate to Seth, and not to Enos*, as it is commonly believed.

Besides, this prophecy by these words, *I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh*, determines that the birth of the Messiah was not near, but was reserved for a further time.

Lastly, it is a very singular thing, that this oracle should be represented to us as coming out of the mouth of a Prophet who was chosen by God out of the family of *Abraham*; because the author of it decides these important questions and differences, without any visible partiality, and without being biassed by the pretensions of his birth.

Now there are three things in it which clearly prove that it could not be unknown to *Moses*.

The first is, that immediately after this prophecy, which was as public and well known amongst the *Moabites* as any prophecy could be, after the tedious preparation, and the many difficulties which *Balaam* made to come to *Balac*; after the many ceremonies and mysteries which he used upon that occasion; and notwithstanding the great and panic terror of the *Moabites*, at the approach of the *Israelites*; nay, and notwithstanding the express threats and ominous prophecies of *Balaam* against that people; notwithstanding all this, I say, we see the daughters of *Moab* imitating the carnal prudence of *Lot's* daughters, and courting the alliance of the *Israelites*, as if they had had a mind to make themselves amends in that way for the loss and wrong they had suffered by the sentence which *Balaam* pronounced in favour of *Israel*.

We see, I say, that *Moses*, immediately after he had related the prophecies of *Balaam*, tells us, that the daughters of *Moab* invited the people of *Israel* to the sacrifices of their gods, and that the people of *Israel* accepted of the invitation, and accordingly feasted, and began then to defile themselves with the daughters of *Moab*.

Now, that such a thing should happen presently after *Balaam* had uttered his prophecy, shews evidently that there was some relation betwixt those two transactions. And this may be further made out, from the manner and nature of the punishment which God inflicted upon the *Israelites* for their criminal commerce with the *Moabites*; although the pretence of it might be grounded upon the design which the daughters of *Moab* had formed, according to the principles of their education, to share in the accomplishment of the promise, by their conceiving and getting children by those whom *Balaam's* prophecy had invested with the right and privilege of accomplishing that promise.

The second is, that accordingly, about two hundred years after *Moses*, we see that *Ruth* the *Moabite's* left her own country, to settle and live at *Bethlehem*, and affected besides to marry there again one of the tribe of *Judah*; no doubt because she had got in her own country a certain knowledge

(a) *Abusaid*, MS. in the French King's library, note 4. upon Gen. iv. 24

knowledge of that famous oracle, which afterwards made her easily yield to the counsels, and receive instructions both of her mother-in-law and of her own husband, who was of the tribe of *Judah*, and, no doubt, had the book of *Moses*, wherein were inserted both the prophecy of *Jacob* in favour of *Judah*, and that of *Balaam* in favour of the *Israelites* against the *Moabites*.

The third is, that the *Jews* have now for several ages constantly maintained, that *Simci's* curses against *David* (b), which afterwards he called *maledictionem pessimam*, מר ומי contained an upbraiding reflexion as well upon the meanness of his birth, as being descended from a *Moabite's*, as upon his adultery, &c. This is related by St. *Jerome*, or some other ancient author, who writ that discourse, *de traditionibus Hebræorum*, upon the second chapter of the third book of *Kings*. This *Jewish* interpretation would be very probable, if that was but true what *Rabbi Salomon* saith upon the second chapter of the first book of *Kings*, v. 19, that when we read there that *Solomon* caused a seat to be set for the king's mother, we ought to understand it of *Ruth* the *Moabite's*, and not of *Bathsheba*. We know the *Jews* ascribe a much longer life to *Zarah*, the daughter of *Asher*, one of *Jacob's* sons; for they are still of the same opinion as they were in St. *Hierome's* time, that she was yet alive in *David's* time.

Nobody can condemn this reflexion upon *Ruth*, if he will but consider, that her faith having been so rewarded, that the *Messiah* came out of her posterity, she is particularly made mention of in his genealogy; and that on the other hand her history hath been preserved amongst the other books of the *Old Testament*, as a kind of prescription, not only against the *Moabites* pretensions, long before condemned by *Balaam's* prophecy, but also against those of the *Israelites* and *Edomites*, who had no better claim to the promise than the *Moabites*, having no other than that of a general call, and of their birthright before *Jacob's* posterity.

C H A P. XII.

That one may see also, in *MOSES's* Law, plain Footsteps of God's Design, in distinguishing these from whom he would have the *Messiah* to be born.

IT was altogether necessary for the execution of my design, to establish well the authority of *Moses's* books, upon which I intend to make some reflexions: it was likewise necessary to shew, as I think I have done sufficiently, that *Moses* was perfectly acquainted with God's promise concerning the *Messiah*. Therefore, I believe, I may now come to shew, that both *Moses*, and those that came after him, had all an eye upon the *Messiah* in their chiefest regulations.

But to give a greater insight and understanding into the things that I am to say, I think it may not be amiss to remind the reader, and to say before him once more, the several characters of God's conduct in that

(b) I. Kings ii. 8.

that matter, that he may be the better able to judge of the whole series of his design.

I have heretofore shewed, that *Moses's* intention was to establish two things in the book of *Genesis*.

The one, that all men have derived their original from *Adam*, whom God created.

The other, that man having sinned, God promised to reinstate him by one of his own posterity.

The first of these was then solidly proved by a plain matter of fact, when I shewed that such a tradition as *Moses* relates about the creation of the world, cannot reasonably be doubted of.

As for what concerns the other, viz. the promise of the Messiah, which was the chiefest object of man's hope and comfort, I have also shewed, I think, that the notion and expectation of it was very strong and lively, and the original cause of all the extraordinary actions recorded by *Moses*.

But as this promise was not to be fulfilled for many ages, so God made it only in very general terms, and had still reserved to himself the revelation for after ages, as he thought fit, both as to the manner and time of its accomplishment. It is therefore absolutely necessary that we should consider also how God preserved all along the distinct knowledge of it amongst men.

Now, in reading my reflexions upon *Genesis*, one must needs have observed that God, even in those early times of the world, did restrain the privilege of accomplishing that promise by little and little to some particular men; till at last he openly declared, that he had settled it in the tribe of *Judah*, as we read in *Gen. xlix.*

Thus we see, that God in the very beginning of the world restrained that prerogative to *Seth's* family, and excluded *Cain's* from it; then afterwards, of all *Seth's* family, he restrained it to *Noah* alone and his family; then, of *Noah's* family, to *Shem* alone; then, afterwards, of all *Shem's* posterity, to *Abraham* alone; then, of *Abraham's* sons, to *Isaac* alone; and of *Isaac's*, to *Jacob* alone, whose son *Judah* was alone invested with that privilege, and all his brethren excluded.

It is moreover observable, that in those seven forementioned restrictions which God made, he seems to have affected to prefer the youngest to the eldest; as it is evident in his choice, if not of *Noah*, and *Shem*, who was elder than the other sons, yet certainly in that of *Seth*, who was younger than *Cain*; of *Abraham*, who was the youngest of *Terah's* sons; of *Isaac*, who was younger than *Ismael*; of *Jacob*, who was younger than *Esau*; and of *Judah*, who was one of the youngest of *Leah's* sons.

So likewise, if the reader would judge of God's design by the event alone, he might justly conclude that God, by this affected choice, intended to raise continual jealousies betwixt the eldest (who pretended that the privilege of accomplishing the promise did belong to them because of their birthright) against their youngest brothers, whom they saw preferred by God's immediate choice.

One may also further add, that God seems to have strengthened these jealousies, by introducing sometimes a sort of conformity amongst the pretend

pretenders to the execution of this promise: thus, for instance, as *Abraham* had two children, so *Lot* had two; as *Jacob* had twelve sons, so *Esau* had also twelve: and sometimes one may find, that those particular persons who are preferred, are charged with very severe accusations.

Now, after all these general reflexions, it is natural for us to consider, what care God hath upon all occasions particularly taken to distinguish and protect those whom he had invested with the right of accomplishing the promise, that their state and succession might never be uncertain.

It was this design, no doubt, which obliged God to make *Setb* the depository of his service and worship, that he might thereby save *Noah* from the flood, and so procure to *Shem* his father's blessing.

It was for this reason that he called *Abraham* out of his own country, and made him travel from place to place, to make him thereby famous in the world, and to invite men by that means to inquire after his profession, his hopes, and his religion.

Again, it was for this that he obliged this Patriarch to the practice of circumcision, which was a real distinction, and an indelible character; and that he likewise confined him to a certain place, by fixing him in some sort to the cave of *Machpelah*, which he had purchased of the children of *Hamor*.

Lastly, it was for that reason that God would have the posterity of *Jacob* distinguished from all other nations of the world, and that he prohibited all alliance with them, as also all imitations of the customs and religious ceremonies practised amongst them.

Now all this being supposed, I say, that whether we consider the end and principal design of *Moses's* laws, or whether we examine his several prophecies, which do particularly characterise the Messiah, we shall find that God did all along continue in his first design of distinction, and consequently of keeping up the jealousies of those that had any pretensions to the privilege of accomplishing the promise; or, which is all one, that he hath prosecuted the same design to Jesus Christ's time, in whom Christians do maintain that the first promise was accomplished, God having then, and not till then, both put an end to all those differences and distinctions, which were only intended to make the Messiah the better known, and the more certainly discerned at his coming, and then to cease; just as scaffolds are taken away as soon as the building is finished; and having also on the other hand rectified the principles from which flowed that spirit of jealousy, amongst those who had the same retention.

We see, that accordingly God excluded all other nations from the right of accomplishing this promise.

We see, that even in the family of *Judah*, who was himself the youngest of the first set of *Leah's* children, he restrained the execution of it to the youngest brothers.

We see, that he raised occasions of jealousies, even amongst the tribes of *Israel*.

In a word, we see, that of all those means which can distinguish any one people from all other nations of the world, or one tribe from twelve, one family from all other families of the same tribe, and one particular person

person from all the rest of his family, none were omitted, but (on the contrary) all made use of by God, to follow this his first design.

This I intend firmly to establish, by examining the thing gradually from *Moses's* time, (by whose ministry God enacted and published those laws by the means whereof he intended the Messiah might certainly be known) to the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we believe that the promise was accomplished.

CH A P. XIII.

That the Manner of God's promulgating his Law amongst the ISRAELITES did much conduce to the distinguishing them from all other Nations.

I DO not barely design here at first to observe the several resemblances which are observable betwixt the things related by *Moses* in *Genesis*, and those which one finds in the following books.

Neither will I merely establish here that, as *Jacob's* going down into *Egypt* with all his children, and the protection they all received there, from *Joseph*, did serve to fulfill the prediction which God made of that event by *Joseph's* dreams, so we may say in general, that the sending of *Moses*, his miracles, and his whole ministry to the time of his death, when he intrusted *Joshua* with the conduct of the *Israelites*, were a literal accomplishment of the first part of the promise which God had formerly made to *Abraham*, to deliver the fourth generation of his posterity out of the captivity which it was to fall into, and then to bring it into the land of *Canaan* to possess it.

Moses indeed represents that people, according to the tenor of the prophecy, as groaning under the hard pressure of a cruel captivity in *Egypt*, when *Joseph* and his eminent services were both forgotten.

Afterwards, he tell us how they were miraculously delivered out of that captivity.

And then, lastly, he informs us, that after he had carried them through many difficulties in the wilderness, he brought them at last to the very borders of *Canaan*, and so left them ready to conquer and possess it, according to God's promises, and their pretensions grounded upon those promises which had been so often repeated to them ever since *Abraham's* time.

Joshua, *Moses's* successor, and in all likelihood the author of the description of his death, is he that accomplished the other part of God's promise to *Abraham*, by introducing the *Israelites* into *Canaan*, and actually possessing them of it: so there is nothing can be imagined more precise in this whole matter.

But it is not all this only that renders both the person and ministry of *Moses* so glorious: there are several other things in *Exodus*, and his other following books, which do much better deserve our consideration.

That

Those books contain, as I have already observed, an exact history of all that God did, in order to give a certain form to the commonwealth of Israel, a fixed place, and a particular service; that is, in order to follow his great design of having the Messiah known without mistake, whenever he should be born amongst the Jews: and this is my chiefest aim in the reflexions upon *Exodus* and the other books of *Moses*.

First, we might say in general, that the observance of the sabbath, and the use of circumcision, did distinguish the Jews; but yet, I have shewed, that the sabbath was a law common to all nations in the world, and that circumcision on the other hand was common both to the *Israelites* and *Edomites*: and this will oblige us to make some particular observations upon that matter; and we must consider how God took care to distinguish that people, by giving them his law.

It is in general evident, that the care which God took to give the moral law to that whole people, did eminently distinguish them from all other nations, whom he permitted to walk in their own ways, as St. Paul expresses it: to be sure, it shews them that he resolved to fix them to himself, and to hinder them from following both the idolatries of other nations, and those inundations of vice which ruin all societies.

And, without doubt, the surprising pomp which accompanied the promulgation of God's law, and which was recorded by his order, before those that had been the eye-witnesses of it, did much contribute to persuade them that God had a particular regard and kindness for their nation, and that he honoured them with his particular guidance.

We may make the same observation upon God's giving them a political law, and upon the care that he was also pleased to take of regulating their civil government, and preventing the difficulties which are commonly occasioned by such accidents as cannot be foreseen by any human legislators, which cause great revolutions and changes in all governments; all which shew sufficiently, that his design was to raise them up to, and to maintain them in as great prosperity and welfare, as possibly could be procured to a nation by perfect laws, and a well constituted government: even the many ceremonies which God gave them, are a further demonstration of God's design to distinguish them from other nations.

It seems not to have been God's intention at first to lay upon them such numbers of ceremonies; for it was only after the commission of the sin of the golden calf, that God laid upon them that heavy and troublesome yoke, on purpose to employ all their time, and so keep them from falling into idolatry again. But, however, *Tanchuma* (c), a famous Jewish author, observes, that there was nothing left in the world, but what God took care to give the *Israelites* some laws about: as, for instance, if any Jew went out to plough, he was forbidden to do it with an ox and an ass; if to sow, he was forbidden to sow his field with several kinds of seed; if to reap, he was forbidden to reap the whole crop: if any one went about to bake bread, he was commanded to take out of his dough, so much as to make a cake thereof to consecrate it; if any one did sacrifice any animal, he was charged to give away to the priest, the right shoulder of it, with both the cheeks and inwards; when any one found

out

out a nest of birds, he was obliged to let the old one fly away; if any one went a hunting, he was to shed the blood of his game, and then to cover it with dust; when any one had planted any fruit-trees, he was to count the first thereof as uncircumcised for the three first years; when any one found a sepulchre, even there certain cautions were prescribed; if any one shaved himself, he was forbidden to *mar the corners of his beard*; when any one built a house, he was to take care there should be rails, and *mezuzoth* made, to prevent all danger; they were obliged to put particular threads in their garments: and there are many other things which were apparently commanded to distinguish the *Jews*, by obliging them to the practice of these, and such other laws as took up all their time. But if we may say, in general, that the whole scope of the ceremonial law was to employ the *Jews*, we may yet more justly say, that it was in particular intended by God to inspire into his people a horror against all idolatrous practices, and an aversion against all commerce with idolaters; and this may be further discerned, if we examine those laws in particular.

One sees this perfectly by the manner of God's pronouncing some meats unclean, and his forbidding to eat the flesh of some animals; for we may find that the greatest part of these animals were worshipped amongst the heathens. Thus the more learned amongst the *Jews* prove that the goat and the ram were of that number; but so, no doubt, were all the animals which were usually offered in sacrifice to God, as particularly the bull. Now there is nothing which alienates two nations from one another more, than when one of them eats or sacrifices that which the other makes the object of his religion.

One of the most learned authors that ever the *Jews* had, hath diligently observed, that God gave many ceremonial laws directly contrary to those rites which the *Zabij* used in their superstitions; and a learned *English* Doctor (d) hath lately proved it very largely, as to the ceremonies which God commanded to be used in the sacrifice of the paschal lamb, and in the manner of their building of the altar, and of their going up to it; in the prohibition of seething a kid in his mother's milk, and of offering honey in their sacrifices; in the prohibition of their forcing their children to pass through the fire to *Moloch*; in the law which prohibited their eating blood, and rounding the corners of their heads, and making any marks in their flesh; and in I do not know how many other laws of that nature, the design of whose institution is not so evident now, since the rites of all those ancient idolaters are utterly abolished, and but imperfectly recorded in some ancient authors.

Thus we see, that we need only make a very little reflexion upon God's conduct, in giving all his laws to the *Israelites*, thereby to judge, that the main scope of those laws was to put a bar betwixt the people of *Israel* and all other idolatrous nations, which should be a visible and a constant distinction, till the Messiah should be born, who was to make all those marks of discrimination to cease entirely.

(d) *Spencer de Leg. Mos. lib. 2.*

C H A P. XIV.

That God seems to have designed to keep up a Spirit of Jealousy in the very Bosom of the JEWISH Nation.

WE have seen, in general, that God, by giving his law to the *Israelites*, intended to discriminate them from all other nations of the world, and in particular from those nations which had shewed themselves to be jealous of that distinction; I mean from the *Moabites*, the *Ammonites*, the *Ismaelites*, and the *Edomites*, as I shall hereafter shew. I have likewise observed that God, by his conduct, and his oracles, did also excite a spirit of jealousy amongst the several pretenders to the promise. I come now to shew that God hath followed the same design in his law, and that he hath made use of that jealousy as of another means to make that people, which he had separated from all other nations, keep up always amongst themselves a lively notion and expectation of the Messiah.

Perhaps the reader may think that these reflexions may interrupt the series of the observations I have undertaken to make upon *Moses's* law: but besides that I shall resume them presently, so one may easily discern, that these two remarks concerning the spirit of distinction, and the spirit of jealousy, kept up in the bosom of this people, ought to be well considered by those that desire to know the genius of God's laws, and the original causes of all the transactions related by *Moses*, and by the other sacred authors, who acted in pursuance of that design which appears in those laws which *Moses* gave to the people of *Israel*.

I begin with two general reflexions, which I think are very useful in the explanation of God's conduct upon this occasion.

Two things, as I have already observed, have conduced to keep up that jealousy whereof *Moses* has given so many instances in the book of *Genesis*.

The first is, the preference which God hath commonly given to the younger brothers before the elder.

The second is, the choice which God hath made of such particular persons as appeared absolutely unworthy of God's choice.

So that here one sees a continual series in the *Jewish* history written by *Moses*, and by the Prophets, who made the same observations upon that model which *Moses* had given them.

First of all, the tribe of *Judah* is preferred before all the other tribes of *Israel*, and particularly before the tribe of *Reuben*, which afterwards occasioned the insurrection of some *Reubenites* in their sedition against *Moses*, wherein *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, perished; just as God's preferring *Abel* offended *Cain*, and as *Joseph's* brethren conspired together to put him to death, because of his dreams, which foretold his greatness and their fall.

Secondly, one sees that *Phares*, *Judah's* youngest son, is preferred not only before all the other children of *Judah*, but even before *Zerah*, the

the eldest of the twins which *Judah* had by *Thamar*; just as *Jacob* was preferred before his brother *Esau*, though they were twins, and *Esau* born the first of the two.

One sees afterwards, that God having chosen *Jesse* of all the posterity of *Phares*, *David*, the youngest of all his sons, was preferred before his brethren, when God was pleased to translate the kingdom to the tribe of *Judah*, and to the family of *Jesse*; just as we saw before, in the election of the first king whom the *Israelites* desired to be set over them, that he was chosen by lot, by an extraordinary effect of providence, out of the tribe of *Benjamin*, though the youngest of all *Jacob's* children.

Thus one sees that *Solomon*, the youngest of *David's* children, was preferred before his brothers, and that the same *Solomon* built the temple of God in the tribe of *Benjamin*, though he himself was of the tribe of *Judah*.

We shall afterwards see that the Messiah was descended from *David*, by *Nathan*, son to one of *David's* younger children, and by *Rehab*, *Zorababel's* youngest son, from whom the Blessed Virgin drew her original.

The second remark is about the care God hath taken, by his choice of some particular persons to accomplish the promise, to furnish those with pretences and objections, who might be interested to oppose the restrictions which God had made in favour of their equals; for as they served to keep up a jealousy amongst all the pretenders to the promise, so they also served to preserve a distinct knowledge of it, and to make them inquire more diligently after it.

In short, as we see that the *Ismaelites* might upbraid *Sarah* both with her frequent rapes, and with her cruelty to *Agar* and *Ismael*; as the *Eunimites* might upbraid *Jacob's* posterity with *Rebecca's* supplanting their father *Esau*, and cheating him of his blessing; so likewise we may observe that God not only chose *Thamar* to have the Messiah descend from her, but also would have her incest with her father-in-law recorded. What! might all the other tribes of *Israel* say, were there then no honest women in *Israel*, that the Messiah's ancestors must descend from those that were born of an incestuous commerce? What probability is there that God should choose the tribe of *Judah*? Had not all the other children of *Judah* a fairer pretension to this privilege, than *Phares* could have? And might not their posterity revive against the posterity of *Phares* that severe law against bastard children which we read of *Deut. xxiii.*

God chose in the like manner *Ruth* the *Moabites*, and had her history written, and his choice recorded, as if he had intended to prepare an excuse for those of the *Israelites* who afterwards would refuse to submit to *David*. What probability is there, might they say, that God would have the Messiah to be born of a *Moabites*, seeing it was by his order that *Moses* caused all those *Israelites* to be put to death, who after the pronunciation of *Balaam's* prophecy held any commerce with the daughters of *Moab*? Was there any likelihood that such a thing could be possible, especially seeing there was a law which God would have to be inserted in *Deuteronomy*, which excludeth the *Moabites* from the possibility of ever being admitted into the people of God. But at least, was not this

this choice of *Ruth* the *Moabitefs*, a fair cause of jealousy to all the other families of *Judah*?

God caused the adultery of *Bathsheba*, the mother of *Solomon*, to be carefully recorded, as it were on purpose to excuse the rebellion of those who afterwards sided with *Jeroboam*, against *Rehoboam* and his authority.

Is it probable (might these rebels say) that God, would have chosen that bloody cruel man *David*, that adulterer, that he and *Bathsheba* should beget the Messiah together?

Had *Jesse* no other children besides *David*? And if *David* must needs have been the man, why should *Solomon*, born of *Bathsheba*, be preferred before all his brothers?

There are three things considerable in this matter.

The first is, that God having given to *Joshua* the conduct of the *Israelites*, after he had formerly raised *Joseph* so much above his brethren by his advancement in *Egypt*, and given to his tribe two portions of the land of *Canaan*, he permitted that *Jeroboam* should rise up against *Rehoboam*, *Solomon's* son; and not only so, but should likewise, according to the prophecy related *Gen. xxviii. 17.* build a temple at *Bethel*, as being jealous against *Solomon*, who built one upon mount *Moriah*, according to the prophecy we find in *Genesis xxii. 14.*

The second is, that this separation gave a fair pretence to raise the reputation of the prophecies which *Jacob* uttered upon his death-bed in favour of *Joseph*; which prophecies ran in terms so very high, that they not only gave colour to *Jeroboam's* pretensions to the kingdom, but did also lead the ten tribes into an expectation that the Messiah should be born, not in the tribe of *Judah*, as *Jacob* had expressly foretold, *Genesis xlix.* but in the tribe of *Ephraim*, according to the constant custom of God's preferring the younger sons of a family before the elder, in the matter of this promise.

The third is, that even the greatest part of the two loyal tribes received at last the interpretation which the other ten made of that prophecy. At least, it appears, that many of the *Jews* have endeavoured to prove that the Messiah should come from the tribe of *Ephraim*, by interpreting several prophecies that way, which, according to their account and their prejudices, were expressed in such terms as could not be understood of him that was to be born in the tribe of *Judah*, and out of the royal family of *David*.

C H A P. XV.

That Circumcision was a Means of distinguishing the ISRAELITES from other Nations.

BUT I must now resume my observations upon *Moses's* laws. Circumcision was, without question, one of the first and most sensible means whereby God did distinguish *Jacob's* posterity from all other people. I will therefore begin with it.

First, the very signification of the word circumcision, implies a real and corporeal distinction: even *Tacitus* understood it so, when he saith, *Circumcidere genitalia instituere Judæi ut diversitate noscantur* (e). But besides, by it God's covenant was, as it were, printed and engraved in the very flesh of all *Abraham's* posterity.

God has explained it thus himself in several places; and one may affirm, that this was very agreeable to God's design, which was, as we have intimated before, to hinder that people, from which the Messiah was to be born, from mingling with the other nations of the world, which would have made the pedigree of the Messiah suspected, or at least much more difficult to be traced.

I will not relate here, the several notions of divines about the use of that ceremony, but only content myself to make two very natural reflexions upon it.

The first of which is, that it was particularly in respect of the Messiah, that God would have that mark made upon that part of man's body which is inservient to generation. As the Messiah was to come into the world by generation, according to the words of the first prophecy concerning him, and also according to the further revelations of God to *Abraham* about that promise, so God could do nothing more agreeable to the idea the *Israelites* had of the Messiah, and of his birth, than to distinguish them, by a relation to that blessed seed which he promised them: as God designed, without all question, by that means to oblige the *Jews* to remember the first promise made to mankind; so, no doubt, he intended by it to fix their minds upon the consideration of that favour he had shewed to them as well as to *Abraham*, to distinguish them from all the people of the earth, that the deliverer of the world might be born in their commonwealth, and from one of their posterity.

The second reflexion is, that it was the same prospect to the Messiah, which made God condemn those to death, who should either remain uncircumcised themselves, or leave their children so.

Is it not a very surprising thing, that so much rigour and severity should be used in exacting the observation of a ceremony which was merely indifferent in its nature, and had no moral goodness in itself? But hereby it appears the more evidently, that God designed that the use of circumcision, by which he distinguished *Abraham's* posterity from all

(e) Hist. l. i.

all other nations of the world, should be a kind of immovable bar, to hinder the *Jews* from mingling with all strangers.

Indeed there are three things which may be objected against these reflexions.

The first is, that it does not appear that this ceremony was counted such a proper sign of distinction, seeing the use of it hath been sometimes intermitted; as, for instance, when the whole nation of the *Jews* left it off for forty years in the wilderness.

The second is, that if the chiefest end of circumcision was to distinguish that people, with design to make the Messiah known, there was no need that that yoke should be laid upon all the *Jews*, but only upon the family from which he was to descend, or at the most upon the tribe wherein that family was comprised.

The third is, that circumcision was common both to *Esau's* and *Jacob's* posterity; and even used amongst the *Egyptians*, and the inhabitants of *Colchis*, as we may learn from *Herodotus*, and some other heathen authors.

But after all, it is an easy thing to satisfy man's mind in all these appearing difficulties. I confess that one is surpris'd to see that God should not oblige the *Jews* to be circumcised in the wilderness; for which several reasons are given.

First, that God, being displeas'd with that generation, would not allow that they should be honoured with this token of his covenant: others say, that their journeying in the wilderness gave them a dispensation from the observance of that ceremony. But we may give a better, I think, and more natural account of that matter, if we do but follow the idea which occasioned my second reflexion.

The going forth of some *Egyptians* with the *Israelites* out of *Egypt*, was a type of the calling of the Gentiles, as I will shew somewhere else: it was then necessary, that as all ceremonies, and circumcision in particular, were then to be abolished, to take away all distinction from among *Seib's* posterity, so the use of circumcision should at that time be suspended.

However, God would not have the suspension of that ceremony to continue till they were entered into the land of *Canaan*.

First, to prevent the intruding of some *Canaanites* into the body of the *Hebrews*.

Secondly, to the end that these *Israelites* who were to enter into *Canaan*, being as well uncircumcised as the *Egyptians* children, and being all made afterwards equal by circumcision, should have no occasion to upbraid them with their *different original*.

The second objection may as easily be answered: one might think at first, that indeed the Messiah had been more easily known at his coming, if the use of circumcision had been enjoined only to the family, or at most to the tribe, from which he was to descend: but besides that it had expos'd that family, or that tribe, to great persecutions, it had certainly much diminished that spirit of jealousy which was kept up by the conformity of the several pretenders, which on the other hand was of mighty use to preserve a distinct idea of the Messiah, and a desire of his coming.

As for the first objection, there is no difficulty in it: it is true, some *Jewish* interpreters imagine, that *Joseph* took occasion to prescribe the use of circumcision to the *Egyptians*, after *Pharaoh* had commanded his people to do whatsoever *Joseph* should bid them to do: but that conjecture is groundless; for it appears that the *Egyptians* who went out of *Egypt* with *Moses*, were not circumcised. It is true, that nation did, some ages after *Moses*, take up the ceremony of circumcision; and it is very likely that it was some *Egyptian* colony which introduced the use of it into *Colchis*: but the observance of that sole ceremony amongst those nations could cause no confusion, because none of them pretended to derive their original from *Abraham*, but had, as historians observe, quite different reasons from those which the *Jews* had for their practice of circumcision.

As for the *Ismaelites* and *Edomites*, the greatest part of the *Jews* are of opinion, that God did discriminate their circumcision from the circumcision which was practised by those nations, by his institution of what they call the *perigna* after the circumcision; which they endeavour to prove by a passage in *Joshua*, wherein it is said, that God ordered *Joshua* to circumcise again the children of *Israel* the second time. But others of them laugh at that criticism, because it appears that those words do relate to the second solemn circumcision which that people did observe after their deliverance out of *Egypt*: therefore, without running to this answer, one needs only follow the idea we have already made use of, which is drawn from God's design of keeping up a spirit of jealousy, by some conformity betwixt the circumcision practised by the *Jews*, and the ceremonies used amongst those rival nations.

Why then were some of the neighbouring nations of *Canaan* descended from *Abraham*, circumcised? As, for example, the *Ismaelites* in *Arabia*, who were circumcised at thirteen years of age; the posterity of *Abraham* by *Keturah*, viz. the *Midianites*, who were in the country of *Moab*, and the *Edomites*, descended from *Esau*, who did all practise circumcision.

Certainly, it is evident, that as God set the *Israelites* in the midst of all those nations, who by virtue of their ancestors birthright, or some other pretensions, put in their claim with the *Jews* to the execution of the promise, on purpose to excite the attention of this people who were surrounded with these rivals, so he did for the same reason permit that the *Ismaelites*, the *Midianites*, and *Edomites*, should practise the ceremony of circumcision, almost in the same manner that the *Israelites* did.

But that we may the better apprehend the force of this reflexion, we need only consider the jealousy which is caused amongst the several sects of Christians, by the conformity of sacraments; which is so far from uniting them with one another, as it might justly be expected, that on the contrary, one may say, that this conformity in some things alienates them from one another, and breeds reciprocal jealousies amongst their several parties, especially when they come to reflect upon the other controverted articles that cause the separation.

Moreover, it is reasonable to consider that God had provided a sufficient distinction betwixt that people and other nations, by giving them
many

many other laws, which had no other visible use than that of *discrimination*; as, for instance, the three great feasts which the *Jews* were obliged to keep.

The feast of the passover was the memorial of the accomplishment of God's promise to *Abraham* to deliver his posterity out of the country wherein they were to be in bondage after 430 years; and consequently could not be observed by the *Ismaelites*, nor by the *Edomites*, who had never been captives in, nor delivered out of *Egypt*, in the fourth generation.

The *Pentecost* was a public monument of the promulgation of the law, and all its parts, amongst the children of *Israel*, and consequently peculiar to that nation.

Thus the feast of tabernacles preserved the memory of that solemn action of the *Israelites* continuance for forty years in the desert.

It were needless, after such remarkable distinctions, to observe here, (which yet was certainly designed for that end) that God took care to distinguish that people by some injunctions, which they were to observe, in the fashion of their clothes, of their beard, of their phylacteries, of their mezouzoth, of their thaleth, of their zizith, and many the like things, the observance of all which served to hinder any confusion of the people of *Israel* with their neighbours.

C H A P. XVI.

That the Law of MOSES engaged the JEWS to the Study of their Genealogies, that they might certainly know that of the Messiah.

BUT if God took care to distinguish his people from all other nations by such an indelible mark, in the practice whereof there was no fear of any trick; seeing no man would circumcise himself without thinking upon it more than once, as the history of the *Sichemites* assures us; so one sees, that he took as great a care to divide them into tribes, and the tribes into families, that they might subsist and continue in a kind of a separation from one another, although they were at first but one single family, and one single nation.

Now to what purpose, I pray, were all those distinctions, if they had not been designed to manifest the Messiah at his coming?

We see then, that they could have no other use; for, as God had decreed that the Messiah should be born out of the tribe of *Judah*, so it was necessary that the several genealogies of that tribe should be very publicly known.

And therefore one sees that God secured this, not only with all necessary care, but even with a caution greater than could have been reasonably desired.

He engages all the tribes of *Israel* to preserve with a kind of affectation,

tion, their several genealogical tables; he neglects none of the means that might be useful to distinguish the tribe of *Judah* from other tribes, and the family from which the Messiah was to be descended from all the other families of the same tribe.

Indeed I am not ignorant that anciently one might see some other nations using the distinctions of tribes amongst themselves, much after the same manner as the *Jews* did, and that they were careful to preserve their genealogies in order to derive their original from the same common father; thus we ought to understand what we read in history of the tribes amongst the *Athenians*. Thus *Hippocrates* runs up his own pedigree to the twentieth man of his ancestors, and *Herodotus* mentions several instances of the same care.

But one sees that this affectation was infinitely greater among the *Jews*.

For we see, that they did not only rank themselves every one under the standard of their own tribe, at their going forth out of *Egypt*, but that God did also engage every man to know his tribe exactly; nay, he compelled them all, in a manner, to study their own pedigrees, that every one might claim, and reap the benefit of the law of *Jubila*, which had the force of an entail in respect of every family, as I am now going to shew.

There are three things observable in that matter.

The first is, that it was by a superabundant precaution, that God would engage the tribes to continue distinguished from one another, and to preserve and study their several pedigrees; namely, he intended by that means to prevent the objection which might otherwise have been made, that it was impossible for a tribe, and a family in that tribe, to continue distinguished from the rest of the nation, for so many ages; for certainly, if all the tribes in that nation, and all the families in every tribe, did continue, by God's providence, so long distinguished from one another, there is no doubt to be made, but he could preserve the single tribe of *Judah*, and the family of the Messiah, distinguished from all other tribes and families of the people of *Israel*.

The second remark is, that it was for this distinction sake, that the books of the Old Testament were filled with genealogical tables; to what purpose else had books of that importance, and wick treated of such great subjects, been filled with genealogies? *Moses's* books are full of them: the first book of *Chronicles* resumes those genealogies with all possible exactness: there is nothing more considerable in the book of *Ruth*, than the genealogy of *David* and his family.

The third remark is, that if the genealogy of the priests seem to have been better known than that of other families, by reason of their being the public ministers of religion, which seems to give the advantage of certainty of distinction to the tribe of *Levi* above that of *Judah*, in that particular; yet we find, that all the families of the whole nation took much the same care to preserve their own genealogies; so that if, after the *Babylonian* captivity, some particular persons were excluded from the priestly order, to which they pretended, because they could not make out their pedigree, so likewise all were thrown out from the other tribes, that could not justify their lineal descent.

Nay,

Nay, there is something further, deserves to be taken notice of, as being very singular, in that of *Judah*; and one ought here to consider a mystery of God's providence, and admire the wisdom of his conduct, in pursuing the design which *Moses* first sets down, and upon which one sees that the whole *Jewish* state was formed; for when God resolved that the Messiah should descend from the tribe of *Judah*, and the house of *David*, he made it more particularly known and distinguished than any other family in the whole nation, and for that reason he sets *David* upon the throne.

Every one knows, that in every kingdom the genealogy of a king, and of the royal family, is, of all others, the most publicly known.

Now, if the blood-royal alone is always distinguished, how much more must it be so, when that supreme dignity is conferred upon such a family, as God had particularly chosen, to have the Messiah, who is set forth as the desire of all nations, to be born out of it!

From hence I will boldly conclude, that the only end for which God raised *David's* family to the throne, was because the Messiah was really to be born out of that family, reduced to a low and private condition, which *Isaiah* foretold, saying, That a rod should come forth out of the stem of *Jesse*, and a branch grow out of his roots (f); and in another place, That he should grow up as a root out of a dry ground (g); which was very agreeable to the character of a Prophet, and to the low state of humiliation in which our Saviour was to appear in the world.

C H A P. XVII.

A Solution of some Difficulties in these Genealogies.

INDEED the dispersion of the ten tribes seems to be a very natural objection, to those who would dispute the reflexions which I have already made upon these genealogies.

But after all, there is nothing in it but what confirms the more the said reflexions.

And we may say, that the entire dispersion of the whole tribe of *Ephraim*, and of the others which adhered to it in *Jeroboam's* rebellion, is a mystery of providence which challenges our admiration, as much as the raising up that family to the throne, out of which the Messiah was to be born.

To apprehend this the better, we need only call to mind the pretensions of the tribe of *Ephraim*: this *Ephraim* was the younger brother of *Manasseh*; but *Jacob* had given him the birthright, just as *Isaac* before had given it to *Jacob*, though it did of right belong to the elder brother.

Jacob had particularly blessed *Ephraim*, and even made it a form of blessing for after-ages, as we read in the book of *Ruth*, that there was

one made for *Pharez*. *Jacob* had given to *Joseph* two portions in the land of *Canaan*, and *Ephraim* had the birthright before *Manasseh*, by God's order: it was then very natural for the tribe of *Ephraim*, as all tribes did apply to themselves the several privileges promised to their respective heads, to look upon themselves as having a particular right to God's blessing.

And they thought this right of theirs was plainly made out, as by *Joseph's* dreams, so especially by the words of that prediction which *Jacob* gave in favour of *Ephraim*, the words of which ran so very high, that after such a prejudice, there might very well be a fair pretence for the hope which the tribe of *Ephraim* had once to see a Messiah come out of their tribe, as those of *Judah* expected one out of theirs.

If to all this we add, that *Jeroboam's* rebellion was authorised by a prophetic inspiration, and by a special sign of God's approbation; and that on the other hand he desired to propose to his people the two calves which he set up in *Dan* and *Bethel*, as symbols of the Deity, only to pursue the ideas of *Pharaoh's* dreams, which *Joseph* interpreted, the representation whereof did clearly shew both the greatness of *Joseph*, and the particular care of God's providence over him (*b*); it was then natural to the men of *Ephraim*, to feed themselves with such hopes, as the *Jews* teach us they did, when, even to this very day, they speak of a Messiah of the tribe of *Ephraim*.

What did God then do, to obviate these pretensions of the tribe of *Ephraim*? He dispersed them, together with the other nine tribes that submitted to the authority of its kings, and so confounded them with all those tribes which followed their fortune, that, though there should be still some *Ephraimites* in the world, yet it would be impossible for any of them to justify his pedigree so clearly, as that any Messiah really descended from that very tribe, could, by establishing his genealogy, put his being of the tribe of *Ephraim* beyond all contest.

Now, according to this notion of things, it is visible (if we may be allowed to enter into the counsels of God) that he did particularly preserve the tribes of *Levi* and *Benjamin*, with the tribe of *Judah*, which was the only tribe that was to be preserved of necessity.

First, because, as *St. Paul* to the *Hebrews* observes; there was nothing ever said, as to the Messiah, of the tribe of *Levi*.

Secondly, because God would, by that means, confound the more effectually all the claims of the tribe of *Ephraim*.

For, in short, if the tribe of *Ephraim* was invested by God with the kingdom over nine tribes of the people of *Israel*, so had the tribe of *Benjamin* been raised up before to the sovereignty over all *Israel*, over the tribe of *Judah*, and even that of *Ephraim* itself.

If the tribe of *Ephraim* was descended from a younger brother, to whom *Jacob* had given his blessing, in prejudice of *Manasseh* his elder brother, (which is considerable, because God hath almost constantly preferred the younger before the elder) so the tribe of *Benjamin* was descended from him that was both the younger brother of *Joseph* himself, and the youngest of all *Jacob's* children; notwithstanding which, the tribe of

Benjamin

(b) *Talm. in Succa, c. 5. in Gem.*

Benjamin did freely yield to the tribe of *Judah*, and granted that the glory of giving birth to the Messiah, was wholly due to them.

Be it as it will, there are two reflexions more which must be made concerning these genealogies, which appear very natural in this place.

The first is, that both *St. Matthew* and *St. Luke* do begin their Gospel with the genealogy of the Messiah.

The other is, that some time after *St. Paul* condemns the study of genealogies, which was still much in use among the *Jews*, as vain. Why therefore is there such a different conduct amongst the disciples of the same master?

Certainly, whoever shall consider with attention the grounds which I have laid down before, must acknowledge, that both *St. Matthew*, and *St. Luke*, ought to have begun their books, as they have done, with the genealogy of the Messiah.

For, first of all, it was necessary that the descent of the Messiah from *Abraham* by *David*, should be clearly made out: it was requisite therefore that they should set down such a genealogy as was known by the whole *Jewish* nation: now this they have done with very great care; and the thing was so easy, and so well known, that even a blind man of the neighbourhood of *Samaria*, the chief city of the kings of *Ephraim*, did publicly call *Jesus* the son of *David*.

But, on the other side, *St. Paul's* forbidding the study of genealogies, does not at all contradict the method of those two Evangelists.

In short, he pursues the very same notions: he saw, that the converted *Jews* applied themselves to the study of genealogies, which was then so great a part of the study of their nation: it is still practised among the *Jews* to that degree, that since their dispersion they gave an exact relation of all the Doctors and Rabbies amongst them who have preserved the tradition, and who were proselites of justice (i). What therefore was to be done in this case? He took it for granted, that God had engaged every *Jew* to study his own pedigree with care, for no other end but only to have that of the Messiah distinctly known whenever he should come.

But the use of these genealogies being once over, by the Messiah's coming into the world, he observes, with reason, that it was no longer necessary to keep up the vain study of all those genealogies.

So that we see he speaks against the study of pedigrees, much upon the same grounds as in other places he inveighs against circumcision; for since the chiefest use of genealogies, as well as of circumcision, was to distinguish *Abraham's* posterity from the rest of mankind, till the Messiah was come, the use of these two observations was naturally to cease after he was once come.

It is, no doubt, for the same reason, that whereas the *Jews* in the Apostle's time took great care, upon all occasions, to take notice of the tribe from which they were descended, as well as to set down the names of their fathers; yet one sees that the Apostles did not all affect it. And if *St. Paul* mentions his being a *Benjamite*, it was for a particular reason; for otherwise, as he preached down the distinction betwixt

Jews

(i) *Maimon. Pref. ad Jad, Chazaka.*

Jews and Gentiles, so he declared himself with the same earnestness against the distinctions which were observed amongst their tribes.

C H A P. XVIII.

That the Manner whereby the Law of MOSES fixed the People of ISRAEL to the Land of CANAAN, was to keep them separated from other Nations.

ONE of the chiefest means which God made use of to distinguish his people of *Israel* from the rest of mankind, was so to fix their affections upon the land of *Canaan*, that they should look upon it as a country which belonged to them by a particular concession from God, which derogated from the *Canaanites* right, to whom that country fell in the division of the earth that was made amongst the children of *Noah*, or which re-established the posterity of *Shem* in their just rights, to whom, if we may credit the ancient tradition, related by St. *Epiphanius* (*k*), this country did really belong by virtue of that division amongst the three sons of *Noah*, though afterwards they were driven out of it by the posterity of *Ham*.

Moses seems to have expressed this truth, when he saith, *Gen. xii.* that when *Abraham* came to *Canaan*, the *Canaanite* was already in the land: that is, he had already invaded it: neither can we refer what he relates in the xivth chapter, concerning the war which the kings from the east came to make against the king of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, to any thing else.

It was then, for this reason, that long before *Moses's* time, God took *Abraham* out of *Chaldea*, from amongst *Shem's* posterity, to bring him into *Canaan* amongst the *Hivites*, the *Amorites*, and other nations already descended from *Ham*, whom God had cursed.

God could have placed *Abraham* any where else; but he chose to bring him into a country which the posterity of *Ham* had seized upon already, rather than into a place possessed by the posterity of *Japhet*, on purpose that the jealousy might be the greater betwixt *Abraham* and the inhabitants of the country into which God had brought him.

Nevertheless, God did not give him at first an entire possession, but only promised him that his posterity should enjoy it, and in the mean while invested him, beforehand, with a right to it, by the purchase of a field for a burying-place, wherein his wife, himself, and his children were buried; by which means he strongly fixed his own mind, and the hopes of his posterity.

In short, it is evident, that all the glory which *Jacob* found in *Egypt* when he was invited thither by *Joseph*, did not make him forget the right which he claimed upon that land, by virtue of the sepulchre both of his father and grandfather, that was there. For *Moses* informs us, that he desired to be carried thither after his death, and that he did expressly re-

(*k*) Hæres. lxvi. n. 84.

quire this duty from *Joseph* and his other children, who paid it in so very solemn a manner, and with a mourning so very great and famous, that the name of *Abel-Mizraim* continued to that very place where the *Canaanites* saw the solemnization of that funeral by the sons of *Jacob*, who were attended by great numbers of *Egyptians*.

One sees that *Jacob's* children still entertained the same hope: *Joseph* solemnly engaged his children to carry his bones into the land of *Canaan*: and one may judge that the other Patriarchs were not less solicitous to require the same office at the hands of their children, as *St. Stephen* (1) supposes it, *Acts* vii. agreeably to the common opinion of the *Jews*: all which shews, that *Abraham's* posterity had their hearts set upon his sepulchre, as upon the pledge and security of God's promise, that they should be once possessed of that land where he was buried.

And as the carrying the body of *Jacob* into *Canaan*, sufficiently shewed what were the claims of the *Israelites*; so the same was very evident by their care in keeping themselves unmixed with the *Egyptians*, all the time they sojourned in *Egypt*. The splendor of *Joseph* was a natural engagement for them to settle themselves there for ever: besides, their vast increase forced them in a manner to it. For a long time the miseries which they endured, invited them to seek the alliances of the *Egyptians* by marriages, and to mix themselves with a people who were their masters, and so to renounce hopes which appeared to be so very groundless. They seemed to have been warranted by *Joseph's* example, who had married an *Egyptian*. However, one never finds that they tried that method. One sees on the contrary, that there was little correspondence between the *Hebrews* and *Egyptians* in their sacred things: for the *Hebrews* sacrificed to God the abomination of the *Egyptians*, that is, those very things which the *Egyptians* worshipped.

One sees afterwards, by the great number of flocks which they drove along with them at their going out of *Egypt*, that they had continued to follow the profession of their ancestors, who were shepherds, a very odious employment to the *Egyptians*.

One sees at last, that after the many miracles which *Moses* wrought in the *Egyptian* court, this people followed God's conduct, and went out of that country, to possess the land of *Canaan*, which none of them had ever seen; and yet they looked upon the obtaining it as a blessing they could not miss of.

There are several things very remarkable upon that subject.

The first is, that some *Egyptians* went out with the *Israelites* to dwell with them in the land of *Canaan*; which was done, not only that there might be some indisputable witnesses, from among the enemies of God, of the truth and greatness of the miracles which *Moses* had wrought amongst them, which also was a presage of the calling of the *Gentiles* to the faith, by their insertion into the body of the *Jews*; but also that there might be some witnesses of the extraordinary affection which the people of *Israel* had for the land of *Canaan*, and of their claims to it by virtue of God's promise, that he would put them into possession of it. For otherwise it is not a common thing that a colony of slaves should be suffered to run away, much less that they should persuade their masters to forsake their

(1) *Talkut. ex Siphre. fol. 311. col. 2.*

their own country, and their settlements at home, to go and conquer another for them.

The second remark is, that God made the *Jews* travel for forty years in the deserts of *Arabia*, not only to make them forget any ties they might have had to return again into *Egypt*, and to accustom them to depend wholly upon Divine providence, but also to redouble their desires after the possession of this land of promise.

It was for the same reason that God forbid them so straitly either the mingling with, or the settling themselves amongst, the *Midianites*, though *Moses* had given an example by marrying *Sephora*; or the *Edomites*, or the *Ismaelites*, or the *Moabites*, or the *Ammonites*, though all those nations were descended from *Terah*, their common father, or from the Patriarchs.

In execution of which severe prohibition, God commanded the *Jews* to put all those to the sword who should make any alliance with those nations, as we have instance of it, *Numb. xxiii.* after the description of *Balaam's* prophecies.

And it could be for no other end that he so straitly charged the *Israelites* to cut off the *Hivites*, *Amorites*, and other nations of *Canaan*, even to the women and little children, but in pursuance of his first design to prevent all mixture of his people with those nations, which without that extreme rigour would infallibly and insensibly have come to pass.

I know very well that God preserved the *Gibeonites*, by ratifying that alliance which gave leave to those people, though of the posterity of *Ham*, to continue amongst his own people in the land of *Canaan*; but though God did in effect preserve the *Gibeonites* amongst the *Jews*, yet he forced them to undergo the drudgery, and servile offices of the tabernacle, and that they might be kept, as unquestionable witnesses of the *Hebrews* pretensions, and of their miraculous conquest of the land of *Canaan*; for the continuance of that nation in the heart of the country, and their submitting to the drudgery of carrying wood and water for the use of the tabernacle, though they were at first of another religion, was, as I have observed already, a continual subject of admiration to the posterity both of the *Jews* and of the *Gibeonites* themselves.

C H A P. XIX.

That the Law tied the people of ISRAEL to the Land of CANAAN, and by several other Means established the Distinction betwixt Tribes and Families amongst them.

ONE may say, that one of the most effectual means which God used to fix his people to the land of *Canaan*, was the law which he gave them to meet thrice a year, and celebrate three solemn feasts together, which

which hardly gave them leave to travel far into other countries, and engaged them, every time they met, to renew, in the public acts of their religion, the memory and the ideas of their hopes: and they con-
 veyed to this design of God in this manner.

Those feasts were celebrated at three times, which were the most commodious seasons of the year for travelling, betwixt the months of *March* and *October*: the celebration of the passover was upon the fourteenth day after the appearance of the moon in *March*; the pentecost was fifty days after; and the feast of the tabernacles lasted from the first to the tenth day of *September*.

In short, the law which obliged the *Jews* to assist at the celebration of those feasts, required the appearance of all the males of twenty years of age and upwards, so very rigorously, that there was no dispensation; for all (without exception) were then obliged to appear: so that, even during the dispersions of their nation, the *Jews* who lived out of *Judea* assisted always at the celebration of those three feasts with great care.

This was a visible way of keeping the tribes of *Israel* distinct, by giving each of them a separate portion in the land of *Canaan*, and by fixing them inseparably to it; as the whole nation was in like manner distinguished, by its being placed in a country entirely by itself.

We see accordingly, that God hath observed that method, by giving a law which enjoins the division of the land of *Canaan* to be made into as many portions as there were tribes, only excepting the tribe of *Levi*, because the *Levites*, as being the public ministers of their religion, were dispersed amongst the other tribes, that they might more conveniently attend to the instruction of the people.

I shall not here take notice of the miracle which was evident in that division, which was an exact accomplishment of the oracle which *Jacob* and *Moses* uttered a little before their deaths.

But I shall observe, first, that as the design of God was to divide that people into tribes, that the tribe of *Judah*, from which the Messiah was to be born, might be the better distinguished and known, so he would, for the same reason, allot the cave of *Machpelah*, the sepulchre of the patriarchs, to the share of the tribe of *Judah*, as also *Ephratab*, the place where *Rachel* was buried, which was afterwards called *Bethlehem*, the town where *David* had his birth, and which was foretold by the Prophet *Micah* under the name of *Ephratab*, as the place where the Messiah should be born in the fulness of time.

We must besides take notice of two particular regulations, by which God fixed his people in the land of *Canaan*, and preserved a distinct idea of this first division of that country.

The first is the law of *jubilee*.

The second is the law of lineal retreats.

In short, by the law of the jubilee, which returned every fifty years, and by which every one that could justify his pedigree, was reinstated in the possessions of his ancestors, God obliged that people to keep up a distinct knowledge of the first division made under *Joshua* (m), and which is described in that book which contains his history, much more effectually than if he had made a law for that very purpose: so that, though the

(m) *Joshua* xiv, &c.

the field of *Ephratah* had been never so often alienated, yet it always returned to the tribe of *Judah*, and so afterwards into *David's* family because it was at first the lot of his ancestors.

This law of jubilee preserved a distinct knowledge of the several tribes and families; and it also kept up a distinct idea of their genealogies which must be preserved entire of necessity, that they might maintain their right to the inheritance of their ancestors.

It would be to no purpose to object against this observation, that it was impossible to know certainly which tribe, and much less which family, every estate did belong to, because one sees that the first proselytes who went out with the *Israelites*, shared the land of *Canaan* together with them: for one sees on the contrary,

First, that God would not allow any of the *Moabites* and *Ammonites* to become proselytes before the tenth generation;

And secondly, that he debarred the *Edomites* from being admitted to make profession of Judaism before the third generation, which excluded them for ever from any possessions in the land of *Canaan*.

And thirdly, one ought to observe the difference betwixt an *Egyptian* proselyte, and a native *Jew*: the quality of a proselyte gave permission to an *Egyptian* to live amongst the *Jews*, and to profess their religion; but it gave him no right to possess any of their land.

And then, besides that, those *Egyptian* proselytes had a particular way of praying by themselves, different from that of the *Jews*, as the *Jews* still testify (n). They could not possess any estate in land amongst them: this is so true, that it was once found necessary to make a particular regulation for the daughters of *Zelophehad* (o), that they might have their division, which was granted only under certain conditions, because the land was not to be divided, but amongst the males of the people of *Israel*.

But this is very considerable, that, by this law of the jubilee, God fixed the *Jews* to the land of *Canaan*, by giving the children a power to look upon themselves, not only as the presumptive heirs of their parents, but to consider their parents only as *usufructuaries*, since all their possessions in land were so entailed, that the children, or right heirs of any man, could not miss of the reversion; because, whatever alienation was made, it could last but for a time, to the year of jubilee, which restored all the alienated possessions, absolutely and entirely, to the right heirs.

Now, that this law was always looked upon as a fundamental law amongst the *Jews*, appears clearly from the words in *Leviticus* (p), and from the history of *Naboth*, which holy man rather chose to die than to comply with the unjust desire of *Ahab*; who would have forced *Naboth* to sell his estate absolutely, notwithstanding God's express prohibition.

The exemplary vengeance which God took upon *Naboth's* murder, and the relation of it recorded in Scripture, is a further confirmation of this same truth: if a king of *Israel* durst not at first infringe that law, if it was not violated by any other than *Jesabel*, who was a foreign princess; if the transgression of that law was punished in such an exemplary manner

(n) *Massa Biccour*. c. 1. S. 4.

(o) *Numb.* xxvii.

(p) *Leviticus* xxv. 23. *1 Kings* xxi.

manner; who can doubt but that it was particularly observed in the tribe of *Judah*, as a fundamental law by which God tied up his people inseparably to this very country?

One needs only make some few reflexions upon those words which God makes use of, *Ezek.* xlv. to agree to what I say, if those reflexions which I have made already upon *Naboth's* murder be also added to them.

One may observe upon the same subject, that though God had several times subjected the *Jews* to a foreign power, yet he never suffered the whole nation to be all carried away out of *Canaan* at one time, nor yet to continue in captivity for the time of two whole jubilees; they were but seventy years in *Babylon*, which was the furthest place that they were ever carried into.

From whence we may naturally conclude, that their genealogies could not be confounded in so short a time, because many that were at the consecration of the second temple had seen the first: nor could the distinct knowledge of the several divisions of their estates be obliterated; because those of every tribe who continued still in the land, might visibly keep them up.

And we here of necessity ought to observe in the first place, what we may read in the xxxiiid chapter of *Jeremiah* (q), concerning the sale of a field which *Jeremiah* bought:

And secondly, what we read *Nehem.* the vii, where he is troubled to see the alienation of their fields, which was a consequence of their misery:

And thirdly, the manner how that people were restored to their estates, according to the fundamental laws of their state.

Another very effectual means to fix that people to the land of *Canaan*, and to preserve their families there certainly without confusion, was the law of lineal retreats, which God instituted for this very purpose.

For in short, when this rule was once laid down, that upon the failure of an heir in any family, the next kinsman was the heir at law, it appears plainly, that every one was obliged, for his own interest, to inquire with diligence into the genealogical lives of his own tribe, that he might instruct himself in the state of the several families of his kindred, and of the several degrees of proximity of blood whereby they might be related, because the exact knowledge of these lists, and of those several degrees of kindred, were absolutely necessary to make use of this right of lineal retreats.

There were two other laws which contributed also to this; one whereof regulated all that was to be done, when there were none but daughters left in a family: a famous instance of which, we have in the history of the daughters of *Zelophehad*, set down twice by *Moses*, on purpose, no doubt, that it should be the more taken notice of, as I intend to shew particularly in another place.

The other law regulated all that the next kinsman of any one that died childless, was obliged to do in respect of the relict, and of the estate of the deceased, if he intended to redeem it. One finds in the book of

Ruth,

(q) *Jerem.* xxxii.

Ruth, an illustrious example of the execution of this law, which may be found *Deuter. xxv.*

Now after all this, let any one judge, whether there could be any stronger ties than these, to oblige the people of *Israel* to continue in the land of *Canaan*; and whether the division which God made of it, betwixt their several tribes and families, was not an infallible means to distinguish them certainly one from another.

C H A P. XX.

That the Laws which MOSES made concerning the State of Virginity, did principally relate also to the MESSIAH, which holds also as to several other Laws.

HITHERTO I have shewed the care which God took to distinguish his people of *Israel* from all other nations of the world; and I afterwards shewed what care he took to keep the distinctions which he first set up amongst the tribes; and I afterwards explained those laws which he gave, to oblige every family in each tribe to remain distinct; and I afterwards made it manifest, that the division of the land of *Canaan* was a very proper means to execute this design of God.

All which shews, that God intended to make it easy for every man to distinguish the Messiah, when it should be once known that he was to be born out of the family of *Jesse*, as it was afterwards foretold by several express oracles.

But as there ought to be something supernatural in the birth of the Messiah, who was to be born of a Virgin, so we ought to see what care God took in his laws, that the birth of the Messiah, even in this very article, might not be a fact too difficult to be acknowledged and established.

In the first promise which God made to man in these words, *That the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head*, being joined with *Isaiab's* prophecy, *Behold, a virgin shall conceive, &c. Is. vii.* it is visible, that for the accomplishment of these oracles, one ought to suppose that the Messiah must be born of a virgin, as the Christians profess to believe. Why should God otherwise have taken care, to insinuate, from the very beginning of the world, that the Messiah was to be born of the seed of a woman, without mentioning any thing of a man, if he had not supposed that he should be born without the operation of a man? And why should *Isaiab* propose the conceiving of a virgin, as an effect wholly supernatural?

In short, God did therefore by his laws not only secure the state of virginity, that this thing might not be ambiguous when it should be accomplished, but (as we shall see here) he has by these laws made it extremely illustrious.

First, besides that, God would have the punishment of death inflicted upon them that were at any time found guilty of sins against nature, as also upon them that should be proved to have had any incestuous commerce with those that were nearly related to them, and to whom either the nearness of blood, or affinity, gave them a more free and familiar access. He moreover straitly commanded, that all prostitutes should be put to death without any mercy (r).

Secondly, he is not contented to forbid fornication and adultery in general, by condemning to death those that expressly should be convicted of it, and by awarding the same sentence against him that should happen to corrupt a contracted virgin, and the virgin herself (s); but he also hinders men, by two ways, from falling into sins of impurity; he permitted, on the one hand, a divorce where the wife did not please her husband, and on the other hand he allowed of polygamy. This toleration made that virgins, on the one side, not remaining too long unmarried, were not easily to be corrupted; and, on the other side, men were not very forward to debauch those women whom they did not intend to marry, or to keep when married; for he that was compelled to marry a virgin whom he had seduced, was expressly forbidden to put her away for ever after (t).

It is natural to observe the design of those laws amongst the people of the *Jews* (u). In short, the desire of issue made them marry very young; most of the men were married at eighteen years of age.

Therefore all virgins thought it a shame to be unmarried; therefore God makes them speak, in the third of *Isaiab*, in that manner, when seven women would marry one man, without asking any thing for diet or clothes, provided only that he would take away that reproach of living without having children. It was this desire of posterity which made the women look upon barrenness as a curse.

Again, this vehement desire of children made eunuchs to be regarded as men particularly abhorred of God, not only by the *Jews*, but also by the Heathens themselves (x): although afterwards they passed for holy men, because they designed to imitate what (as they were told) had happened to *Noah*, by his son *Ham*, which introduced the custom amongst the *Assyrians* of castrating themselves, that they might be priests.

Thirdly, God commanded, that any virgin which was betrothed to a husband, and was corrupted in her father's house, or that was ravished without calling for help, should be punished with death (y); so that all the virgins were indispensably engaged, for fear of losing both life and honour together, to preserve their virginity with all possible care.

But here is a fourth law concerning this matter, whereby God obliged the parents of all contracted virgins to take a more than ordinary care of them, when he commands, *Deut. xxii. 21. That a virgin for whom the tokens of virginity were not found, should be brought out of the door of her father's*

(r) *Exod. xxii. Deut. xxii. Levit. xviii. Levit. xx. Deut. xxiii. 17.*

(s) *Exod. xxii. Levit. xx. Deut. xii.*

(t) *Deut. xxii.*

(u) *Massic. Avoth. c. 5.*

(x) *Lucian. de Eunuch. p. 537. Lucian. de Dea Syriâ, p. 1069.*

(y) *Deut. xxii.*

father's house, and there be stoned to death by the men of the city; for so her parents were, by that means, made partakers of the punishment of her crime, and their negligence was severely punished by such a shameful execution as dishonoured their whole family.

Fifthly, God submitted women to the examination of their husbands to whom they were married: nay, one would think that he intended to raise the jealousy of husbands, when he gives them leave to bring their wives to a public trial, and to punish them with death, when they did not preserve the tokens of their virginity.

It was for that reason that he commanded (z), that the parents or near relations of the young married women thus complained of, should produce upon all such occasions the tokens of the virginity of those daughters which they disposed in marriage, which was usually done with many solemn circumstances and formalities.

And here are three things which deserve to be attentively considered.

The first is, the custom that was amongst the *Jews* for parents never to let their virgin daughters go out their houses; which custom made them be called *concealed*, in opposition to those that went abroad, that is, that were prostitutes.

The second is, another custom which the just desire of preserving the virginity of their daughters against all accidents, had introduced amongst that people; which was, that all their virgins did wear a sort of fetters, which are called, in the *Talmud*, *cevalim*, which are described by the famous *Moses*, the son of *Maimon*, in this manner: *Cevalim sunt compedes in forma periscelidis, inter quos interposuerunt catenulas, illis compedibus ornabant se virgines, ut non incederent passu magno, ne contigeret ipsis damnum in virginitate sua* (a). This description may be thought to be one of the foolish fancies of the modern *Jews*, if we did not meet with proofs of the practice of that custom in more ancient times. In short, one sees, in the third of *Isaiab*, that chains are reckoned up amongst other ornaments of the daughters of *Israel*, which God threateneth to take away from them, when he would force them to go captives into *Babylon*.

The third is, an ancient tradition mentioned in the *Pirke Eliezer*, in the sixteenth chapter, *Solent Israelitæ digito educere virginitatem, ne incidant in dubitationem vel suspicionem, juxta illud, sumat pater & mater puellæ, &c.*

In a word, it seems that, for fear lest these tokens of virginity should be thought to be obscure and ambiguous by their husbands, God has provided for the securing of the virginity of their young women before marriage by a miracle, the experience whereof was ordinary and common amongst so jealous a people; I mean, the waters of jealousy (b), which all women, whose carriage was suspected by their husbands, were obliged to drink, by which God did either miraculously justify them, or else he began to inflict a punishment upon them, which was so much the more dreadful and exemplary, as it proceeded from the hand of God himself. This miracle lasted to the destruction of the second temple, as the *Jews* themselves tell us in that title of their *Talmud* (c) which concerns women suspected of adultery.

However,

(z) Deut. xxii.

(a) *Ad Massic. Sabbath. c. 6. J. 4.*

(b) Numb. v. *Joseph. l. 3. Antiq. p. 95.*

(c) *Sota, c. 9.*

However, as God works no miracles without great reasons, so he here made a law, the observance whereof was very rigorous; which was, that he would not suffer any women to be married when there was the least probability that they had their courses, but that they should be separated at that time, as unclean.

The reason of this law was, because it was then almost impossible but that the lewd women might have imposed upon their husbands in the marks of their virginity, which at that time are very uncertain; not to say, that, as a politic lawgiver, he might prescribe the observation of this law, lest the commonwealth of the *Jews* should have been overstocked with weak and sickly people.

Lastly, one sees that God himself has fastened a blot upon leprous persons, because they were supposed to have been conceived when their mothers had their courses (*d*): and hereupon was that law of God founded, which debarred lepers for ever from the right of coming into the congregation of his people.

One ought to make the same observation upon those that were unlawfully begotten; for they were deprived of the right of entering into the congregation; and how innocent soever they were, as to the lewdness of those who gave them their lives, yet they were thus with them made partakers of the punishment of their sin.

If one considers all these several laws attentively, one shall find, on the one hand, that several of them were of very little moment, except we suppose that God intended to secure the state of virginity by them beyond all danger; and on the other hand, one shall find that some of them are very severe about things which do not seem to deserve so terrible a rigour.

But if we consider them according to God's design, as he hath afterwards particularly explained it, they will appear, I am confident, to be all very worthy of the wisdom of such a lawgiver.

One needs only reflect upon that method of God that I have now explained, to see that nothing can be conceived to be better managed, than this model according to the design which God himself had drawn.

One may make the same observations, and examine the same strokes of the wisdom of God, in several other precautions which he made use of to make the Messiah be perfectly distinguished according to the several characters under which he was to be proposed afterwards by the ministry of the Prophets.

One sees that the Messiah, being to be born of a virgin, was to be a first-born; and for that reason, we find many laws which distinguish in general the privileges of the first-born.

So it appears, by the xviiith of *Deuteronomy*, that the Messiah was to be a Prophet; and therefore God afterwards gave notice by the Prophets of all those lights which should particularly appear in him. In prospect of this, God gave, by the ministry of *Moses*, such characters as would distinguish the true Prophets from those who endeavoured to usurp that name.

It appears also, that because God was to communicate to the Messiah, a power

(*d*) *Isidor. Pelus*, l. 5. Ep. 117. *Joseph. Antiq.* l. 3. p. 94.

a power of working miracles (which *Moses* intimates, by saying that he was to be a Prophet like unto him), therefore *Isaiab* specifies the character of those miracles in chapter xxxv. of his prophecy; and God explains, in particular, the laws concerning the blind and the lame; and for the same reason, he gives an account of all sorts of leprosy, that it might be distinctly known which was incurable.

It is easy to those who will attend to the law of *Moses*, to see that they were subservient to this design of God, in pursuance of those prospects which we have already set down.

C H A P. XXI.

That it was the Design of God, by all these Ceremonies, and particularly by that Veneration which he inspired the JEWS with, for the Tabernacle, to preserve the Ideas of the Messiah, whom he had promised, in their Minds, by distinguishing them from all other Nations.

AFTER all those observations which I have made upon the several laws that God made use of to execute his design of fixing his people to a certain place, and there to keep them separate, it is natural to judge, that the ceremonial laws which he gave them for the regulating their outward worship, were also intended for the same end. This I must shew, in respect of the holiness which God ascribes to the land of *Canaan*, and in respect of the whole service of the tabernacle, of its mysterious construction in all its parts; and in respect also of the raising of the material temple, afterwards, to be as it were the centre of their whole religion.

It was certainly for this purpose that he particularly consecrated several things to himself, as the first fruits, and the first-born; and that he set apart certain times, as the first day of the month, and certain solemn feasts, besides the sabbath-day, which were celebrated long before. And he also consecrated several places, as the towns of refuge; and yet more particularly, the tabernacle and the temple: but it was especially for that reason, that he had consecrated certain rites and ceremonies, certain sacrifices, both of animate and inanimate things, and certain offerings of gold and silver, perfumes, &c.

One sees that he rejected any first fruits that did not grow in the land of *Canaan*: one sees, that though some sacrifices were common to the *Jews* and their neighbours, yet he distinguished them by so many circumstances, that they were much different from the others: thus he forbids them to make use of statues before which other nations used to sacrifice at that time; and he commanded them not to sacrifice upon high places, where the heathens used to make their offerings very early in the morning, at sun-rise, which gave rise to their worship of the rising sun.

But there is nothing more discovers the design of God, than the laws by which he fixed their worship, first to the tabernacle, and afterwards

to the temple, at the places where God did particularly reside. One may say, that it was for that reason God commanded the representations of angels, and of his law, and of the manna, to be preserved there; all which, besides that they were memorials of the ancient apparitions and favours of God to that people, were express figures of God's glory, of his will, and of his miraculous power: he added also a candlestick with seven branches, a table covered with loaves, and an altar of incense, which were figures of the seven planets of this visible world; of the blessings which we enjoy by nature, and of those acknowledgments which we owe unto God for all these: he commanded also, that none should offer sacrifices in any other place except the temple.

He would not permit that any but those who were purified according to the law should enter into it; he excluded all uncircumcised persons for ever: as *Moses* had formerly been commanded to pull off his shoes in the desert, at his approaching to the burning bush, so every one that entered into the temple, was to enter barefoot, as a mark of that respect which had formerly been exacted of *Moses*.

And what other reason but that, could oblige him to give, both at the consecration of the temple, and afterwards, so many sensible marks of his presence? That cloud which was called his Glory, rested there; the *Urim* and *Thummim*, which was an oracle for that whole nation, was there; there was a daily sacrifice offered up for the whole people; there were celebrated the three solemn feasts of the passover, of pentecost, and of tabernacles: he forbade them to sacrifice any where else, and he gave frequent and illustrious oracles at that place.

One ought also to observe, that after this temple (to which all the glory of the tabernacle was transmitted) was fixed at *Jerusalem*, he ordered it to be such a sensible mark of his presence, that when we read the history of *Israel's* march in the desert, we find that the tabernacle was the image of the temple, and built after its model: so that as the tabernacle always stood in the midst of the tents of the *Levites*, and the *Levites* in the midst of the whole camp of all the tribes of *Israel*, who were all listed under their proper standards; so one sees afterwards, that the temple, the *Levites*, and the people of *Jerusalem*, were placed, according to their different degrees of holiness, as they were to approach to the most holy place, which was the habitation of his holiness.

Certainly, one may say, that the building up of a tabernacle, or of a temple, seems to be directly contrary to the nature of religion, according to which, God who is a spirit, will be worshipped in spirit, and in truth; so that this seems to have been quitted for a time, when he commanded the building of a tabernacle.

But really there was nothing more agreeable to the design which God had formed at first, as to that people: he intended to make it visible; and it appears that nothing could be more effectual to make it so, than the double necessity to which that whole people was reduced, to meet in a body several times every year in the same place, and to offer all their sacrifices in the tabernacle, and to be there perpetually employed in the ceremonial service, which did inseparably draw them thither, and fix them there.

The end of all those visible assemblies, was to perpetuate the knowledge

ledge of the principal verities of their religion, and especially to renew perpetually the hopes of that people, as to the Messiah, who was promised to them from God.

For God having shortened the long lives which men commonly enjoyed in the beginning before they went out of *Egypt*, so that five or six persons could no longer preserve the tradition of 2000 years as they had done till *Moses's* time, God was of necessity obliged to make use of some other means to supply that defect.

He had already made use of several before ; amongst which, was that which we find described *Deut. xxvii.* where he ordered the building of an altar with rough stones, whereupon the names of the twelve tribes, and the whole law, were to be engraved.

He afterwards followed other methods ; and thus we see that *Samuel*, following *Moses* and *Jeshua's* example, repeats before a solemn assembly of the people met at *Gilgal*, for the consecration of *Saul*, the things that came to pass during the government of *Bedan* or *Sampson*, of *Jephtha* and his own.

But yet the best way was to fix this people to one tabernacle, wherein we see that besides the monuments which preserved the memory of the great miracles that God had wrought at the foundation of the Jewish commonwealth, as the pot of manna, *Aaron's* rod that blossomed, the plates of the altar that had been made out of the censers of *Corah*, *Dathan*, and their confederates—

One sees that the law, and the books of the covenant, were deposited there by God's order, and the principal transactions and deliverances that were wrought by God in the behalf of that people, were continually celebrated with hymns and other tokens of public thankfulness.

It was, no doubt, upon this account, that he caused the book of the law to be laid up there, with many ceremonies and expiations ; and that he enjoined it to be read publicly in the presence of the whole congregation every seven years : one sees that he commanded that every family should read this book continually, and that all should entertain their wives and children, from their tenderest years, with the design of the law, night and day, in the country, and in the town, at all times, and in all places.

One sees that God engaged them to it, not only by an express command, but also by an indispensable necessity, because he made it death for any man to violate any of those ceremonial laws, from a principle of obstinacy : no pardon could be obtained for the transgressions committed through ignorance, before they were expiated by certain sacrifices, the forms whereof were scrupulously prescribed in the law, and which could be violated upon no account whatever.

If one considers those things, he may say that the *Jews* had scarce one moment free in their lives ; so pressing was the necessity which lay upon them to consult the law of God, the regulations of which were so very exact and particular, that there, no actions, public or private, could happen, but what were regulated and determined by these constitutions.

If a beast was born, the owner was to examine whether it was the first-born,

first-born or no, whether it was clean or unclean, and whether it was to be redeemed, with several other things of this nature.

If a woman was big with child, there were many questions to be asked: when she came to lie-in, several very different ceremonies were practised, according as the child was first-born, or not. The law enjoined various purifications, according as the woman brought forth a son or a daughter.

God had prescribed a great number of laws for all the accidents of life; for marriages, for successions, for funerals, for mourning, for unforeseen accidents, as the death of a man that was killed without the design of his murderer; for several crimes that might be committed, in their several pollutions and sequestrations, &c.

It seems that this whole people, from the time that they came to the use of their reason, to the time of their death, was still continually obliged to keep up a correspondence with the priests and *Levites*, whom God had for this purpose dispersed amongst all the tribes of *Israel*, and to consult the law and the testimony, to be instructed in the manner of governing themselves; but particularly, they were to look upon the temple and the tabernacle as the centre of their whole religion: and how could they do this, without carrying their prospect at the same time to those great promises of the Messiah, of which the *Israelites* were depositaries? I say, upon those promises, which raised up so many jealousies betwixt their forefathers and the ancestors of those neighbouring nations, with whom they had always some controversy, and were to be considered as glorious and honourable to the whole nation.

C H A P. XXII.

That it appears by the Books of Moses, that this whole Model which God had framed, was to last but until the Coming of the Messiah.

BUT if we find in *Moses's* law a severe restriction in all that belongs to the execution of the promise of the Messiah (which shews that God intended to have that nation distinguished from all others, till the blessed seed was come); if we find that he restrained that promise to one tribe, one town, one family, one particular individual person in that family, that they might not be to seek in a confused crowd of a whole people, made up of several millions of persons, or in a whole tribe, or even in a city filled up with several families; if, upon this account his birth was restrained to one people, one tribe, one little town, and one single family which was settled there, the *Jews* could not but observe that it was God's design to break all those restrictions, and to follow quite another method, when the Messiah was once come.

For, in the first place, the first promise of the Messiah was expressed in very general terms, which mentioned a common benefit to all the sons of *Adam*. This promise was made before God had rejected *Gain's* posterity,

rity, by preferring that of *Seth*; it was made before the restriction was made to *Noah* in *Seth's* family, and to *Shem* in *Noah's* family.

Secondly, God, who by circumcision had distinguished *Abraham* and his posterity from the rest of the family of *Shem*, did expressly promise to *Abraham*, that in his seed all the nations of the world should be blessed. This promise was made also before God had restrained the promise to the person of *Isaac* in prejudice of *Ishmael*, and then afterwards to the person of *Jacob*, in the prejudice of *Esau*.

Thirdly, one sees this same truth yet more clearly explained out of *Jacob's* oracle concerning *Judah*, *Gen. xlix.* wherein *Jacob* expressly foretells that the Messiah should be the expectation of the nations; that is to say, the comfort, the glory, the hope, and the joy of all the nations of the universe.

As this was a capital truth, so God proposed it by *Balaam*, at the *Israelites* entering into *Canaan*, that they might thus understand, that all those distinctions which their separation, living in *Canaan* from the rest of the world, might keep up, were not always to last.

But this particular appears out of *Moses's* law, which allows of several sorts of proselytes, receiving some without tying them to the observance of all the ceremonies in the law; which it would never have done, if it had been absolutely necessary to be a *Jew* before they have a share in the benefits of the promise.

Secondly, it supposes that God was to remove that people out of *Canaan* into remote countries, and to disperse them, as it were, into the uttermost parts of the world, which was done by Divine Providence, only to publish the promise of the Messiah, to establish the belief in the Prophets, and so to facilitate the calling of the Gentiles to the faith.

Thirdly, he declares expressly, as *St. Paul* observes, that he was to call his people, that which was not his people, that he might by that means provoke the people of *Israel* to jealousy. This notion of jealousy, mentioned by *St. Paul*, deserves to be taken notice of with very great care, if we reflect upon the spirit of jealousy which reigned amongst the *Israelites* and their neighbours.

I shall take notice in another place of the great number of oracles of *David* upon the same subject, although he otherwise insults upon the *Moabites* and *Edomites*, upon all occasions, and shews as much aversion and jealousy against those nations, as was possible for one that lived in a continual war with those people.

I shall also make some reflexions upon *Solomon's* marriage with the princesses of *Tyre*, of *Sidon*, and of *Egypt*; that is to say, with the posterity of *Ham*, which was united to that of *Judah*, to take a part with them in the blessing; from whence it came to pass, that the Song that was written upon that marriage, was preserved as a piece divinely inspired, and ought to be considered as a happy presage of the calling of the Gentiles to the communion of the Messiah.

One may also join here the manner of *Solomon's* giving to *Hiram's* subjects, who had helped him in the building of the temple, the country of *Chabul*, which was enclosed within *Judea*, although those people were of the *Canaanites* posterity, upon whom *Noah* had particularly pronounced, *Cursed be Canaan*(e).

One

One may also see, that as God had permitted his people to be transported into *Chaldea* and *Babylon*, and had raised up there Prophets amongst them on purpose to acquaint the world with the glorious hopes of the *Jews*, so he caused the books of Scripture to be translated into Greek above 300 years before our Saviour's birth, not only to prevent all suspicion of falsehood in the minds of the Gentiles, if they were produced of a sudden after the birth of the Messiah, but also to instruct the Heathens by little and little of the right which all nations had, as well as the *Jews*, to that promise; that they might take their share in it, whenever they should be invited to it by God; and especially to take away the scandal which was to follow upon God's destroying the form of that commonwealth by the *Romans*, according to *Daniel's* prediction.

All these things, no doubt, engaged the *Jews* who read the books of *Moses* to make particular remarks upon them.

But they ought to have observed three things especially: the first was, that although God had at first chosen their whole nation, yet he was pleased to disperse afterwards almost ten parts of thirteen; which plainly shewed that this choice which he had made, was only an economical choice, and for a particular design.

The second is, that although he was very severe and punctual in exacting obedience to the ceremonial service, yet he had fixed the most part of their observances to certain places, to certain times, and to certain persons: it was easy to judge, that when God bounded them in this manner, it was only for an economical service, prescribed only upon a particular prospect, which was one day to have an end.

The third is, that experience convinced them that although God seemed to have fixed his service to the temple, yet he suffered the *Chaldeans* to destroy the first, and did not restore to the second the first marks of his presence, when it was rebuilt by the order of *Cyrus*.

From whence it was natural to conclude, that such a glory as retired by little and little from that place which God had chosen, was only designed to be there for a time, till God should extend his service, by calling all the world to his religion, and so making the whole universe his temple, as we see it done in our days, by the calling of the Gentiles to the religion of our Saviour.

T H E
P R E F A C E.

IN my Reflexions upon the Book of *Genesis*, I have shewed the means God made use of to imprint the ideas of the Creation of the World, and the Promise of the Messiah, during that long tract of 2500 years, before the children of *Israel* departed out of *Egypt*, and before the history of it was penned by *Moses*.

They that consider that God at first prescribed the law of the sabbath, to fix the belief of the creation of the world, and that this law hath been constantly observed since the beginning of the world until *Moses*, and is still to this day observed amongst the *Jews*, easily apprehend, that this fact of the creation could not be more incontestably proved, or more firmly grounded.

In like manner an attentive reflexion upon the Oracles which I have mentioned, and which alone at first were the foundation and hope of the religion of the Patriarchs, and were afterwards recorded in the book of *Genesis*, is sufficient to persuade any one that it was impossible but the memory of the Promise of the Messiah should be deeply engraved in the minds of the *Israelites*, though we should suppose that the spirit of jealousy which God had raised amongst the several pretenders to the execution of that great Promise, did not much contribute to preserve the remembrance of it; as I have shewn very carefully, that it was very useful for that purpose.

I have in my Reflexions afterwards proved, upon the four last Books of *Moses*, that God prosecuted the same design in the laws which he gave to the people of *Israel*, as well as in the peculiar forms and regulations of their government and religion; the great design of which rules, was only that the Messiah, at his appearance in the world, might be unquestionably known.

Whoever shall read the Reflexions which I have made upon this matter, will easily perceive, that the long life of the Patriarchs was of great efficacy, to make so fresh and lively an impression of those illustrious facts, the Creation of the World, and the Promise of the Messiah, that there was no need of very frequent Oracles to confirm the same; as indeed we find that, in the space of 2553 years, only five or six principal Oracles were given, which have a particular relation to the Messiah, as I shall shew afterwards.

Now this reflexion being once supposed, as the life of man was afterwards considerably shortened at the time of *Moses*, so one may judge that this promise ought to be more frequently proposed, and more clearly explained. And we ought to suppose that in proportion to the delaying of the Promise, and the shortness of men's lives, which discouraged their hopes of ever seeing a Promise fulfilled, which their ancestors, whose lives were much longer, could never attain to the more distinct knowledge which God gave of this great object, was in order to stir up strong desires in the minds of the *Israelites*, as well as of the *Gentiles*, to whom God was afterwards to renew the ideas of it: and consequently we find that a greater number of Oracles and Prophecies were required, from time to time, to entertain and strengthen the belief of a Promise, the accomplishment whereof was so considerably deferred.

And indeed this was exactly the method which God followed, the spirit of Prophecy having in a most illustrious manner been employed to preserve the ideas of the Promise of the Messiah, and to increase them in the minds of the *Jews*, until the time of the accomplishment itself; and God hath so exactly set down by the Prophets, the several parts of his design, as there needs not be afterwards any difficulty in discerning the prosecution of that design which he had formed at first.

I intend, in this third part of my Reflexions on the Writings of the Old Testament, to explain this method which God hath followed, in shewing how he hath accommodated himself to the state of the *Jews*, whom he had made the depositaries of his Oracles, and proportioned them to their understanding and desires.

For the more happy execution of this design, and a clearer discovery of this conduct of God, which seems somewhat obscured, by intermixing these predictions concerning the Messiah, with a great number of events, during that series of ages whereof we have the history written by his own order, I think myself obliged first of all to explain the reasons why God was pleased to interweave the Oracles which relate to the Messiah, with other matters that seem to be of a very different nature; and then shall lay down the rules which one ought to follow, in applying the ancient Prophecies to the Messiah.

After these preliminary Reflexions, I suppose, that in order to a fuller discovery of the series of God's design, and a more distinct knowledge of the progress of the revelation of this matter, that I ought again to resume, and to set before the eyes of the reader, the five or six principal Oracles which God hath given concerning the Messiah, from the beginning of the world to *Moses*, together with that Oracle which he uttered by the mouth of that illustrious legislator.

One will easily judge, without my undertaking to prove it, that the ideas of these Oracles were familiar to the *Jews* until *David*, during the space of 400 years; after which, God began to discover the same more particularly, in choosing *David* to be the person in whose family that Prophecy should be accomplished, because the Messiah was to be born of his seed.

And so I shall immediately pass on to the consideration of those Oracles which *David* himself uttered on this subject, which deserve so much the more

more attention, because God, who at that time changed the government of the *Jews*, did considerably augment the ideas which the ancients had concerning the Promise of the Messiah.

Lastly, I shall collect under certain heads those Oracles which were uttered by the Prophets concerning the Messiah, some hundred of years before the captivity of the *Jews* in *Babylon*, and soon after; and forasmuch as the light concerning this matter was at that time much increased, and the Oracles themselves are much more clear and distinct, as giving many more particular characters of the Messiah, so I shall content myself briefly to touch upon them; in following the principal characters which they give concerning the Messiah.

After which, I shall have nothing else to do, but to make some reflexions upon the state of the *Jews*, from the time of the last of the Prophets, until that wherein the Christians pretend that this Promise and these Oracles were accomplished in the person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Though the multiplicity of the things which I am to handle, and which I intend to do with the greatest briefness that is possible, might seem to oblige me to omit the examining the succession of the history of the *Jews*, yet God having been pleased to intermix the history of the *Jews*, and many other transactions, with these Prophecies, it obligeth me in this third part to make also some Reflexions upon the Historical Books of the *Old Testament*. And indeed this will be of great use to prove the truth of these Oracles, and the manner how God hath constantly followed that draught which he at first formed to himself; as also to make it appear, that notwithstanding the different revolutions of the *Jewish* commonwealth, he hath always continued those means which he chose at first, to facilitate the distinct knowledge of the Messiah, whenever he should appear.

It is very necessary to explain this series of the design of God, to make the authority of these Prophecies more firm and unmovable; those laws, the observation of which serve to distinguish the family of *Judah*, and that of the Messiah, being so many boundaries and limits, within which God was pleased to confine himself, that his conduct in this matter might be the more easily observable and known.

And forasmuch as, in my Reflexions upon the Books of *Moses*, I have begun by the firm establishment of the truth of those Books on which I made my reflexions, without which that work would have wanted all its strength, so I intend also in this part to follow the same rule; and accordingly I shall at first establish the truth of the Historical and Prophetical Books of the *Old Testament*: for if one ought to prove that these Prophecies were well known and very famous, then it will be expected from me that I should solidly demonstrate the truth of those Books in which those Oracles are recorded, before I can of right conclude that the facts which are related by other authors are the accomplishment of these Prophecies.

This design would naturally engage me to prove the truth of every one of these Books, in order, particularly: but as I have not only proved the truth of the Books of *Moses* already, but that moreover, I intend, in my Reflexions on the Books of the *New Testament*, to demonstrate the truth

truth of them beyond all contest; and besides, that the Historical and Prophetical Books of the *Old Testament* are so essentially linked with those of *Moses*, and the Disciples of Jesus Christ, that it is impossible to acknowledge the truth of the one, without owning at the same time the truth of the others; I believe I may be dispensed with, as to the proving the truth of every Book of the *Old Testament* in particular; and therefore, because I intend to be very short, I will confine myself to some general Reflexions upon those Books of the *Old Testament* which were writ since *Moses*, but such as, I hope, will be sufficient to satisfy an equitable and intelligent Reader,

REFLEXIONS

REFLEXIONS
UPON THE
HISTORICAL AND PROPHETICAL BOOKS
OF THE
OLD TESTAMENT,
TO
ESTABLISH THE TRUTH
OF THE
CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

C H A P. I.

That there is, in the Historical Writings of the OLD TESTAMENT, an uninterrupted Series of Events, which have a natural and necessary Dependence for more than Ten Ages.

THE first general proof which I make use of to establish the truth of the Historical Books of the Old Testament after *Moses*, may be lawfully drawn from the uninterrupted series of events which are related by those authors who have written the History of the State and Church of *Israel*.

We may observe several considerable *epochas* of this history, which takes in about one thousand and forty years.

The

The first part takes in all that happened after *Moses* till the establishment of the kingdom, which is related in the books of *Joshua*, *Judges*, *Ruth*, and the first book of *Samuel*.

The second contains the history of the kings of *Judah* and *Israel*, till the destruction of *Samaria* and *Jerusalem*.

The third contains an account of what passed during the *Jewish* captivity, and after their re-establishment.

Now, there is not one of these books which concern the history of this people, in one or other of these *epochs*, which has not certain characters of the truth of its relations, by the necessary connexion which it has, either with those events which went before it, or with those which followed it, and this by a natural and immediate dependance. This ought to be confirmed by some observations.

The book of *Joshua*, which contains the conquest and division of the land of *Canaan*, is the execution of *Moses*'s design, who brought the people of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, to go and make themselves masters of a country which the *Jews* pretend that God promised to *Abraham*. The division of this land amongst the tribes, is the title which each tribe had to its possessions in it; and this division subsisted a great while very distinct, and well known by the several tribes of this people. There happened no considerable change, but only when the kings of *Affyria* carried the ten tribes into captivity, after the taking of *Samaria*, in the three thousand two hundred and eighty-third year of the world; the country continuing in the same state, under the two remaining tribes, without any change ensuing upon their transportation into *Babylon*, as I have observed in the nineteenth chapter of my Reflexions upon *Exodus*, and the following books.

This book has a very natural influence upon the following books, as is manifest from the history of the alliance which the *Gibeonites* got from the *Jews* by surprise. It serves for a foundation to all that happened for four hundred and thirty years after, in *David*'s reign, under whom the commonwealth, being already changed into a monarchical government, had in all appearance undergone a great alteration.

The book of *Judges* has an essential relation to the books of *Moses* and *Joshua*, the most part of the captivities of the people of *Israel* being a consequence of their quarrels with the nations which they had subdued, or with their neighbours, as the *Moabites* and *Ammonites* descended from *Lot*, who were jealous of this people that was descended from *Abraham*.

There we may see, for instance, the *Israelites* upon the defensive part, because God forbid them to set upon the *Moabites* and the *Ammonites*; whereas these last pretended that *Israel* had usurped some part of their country.

It must be granted, that there is nothing so remarkable as the actions of these judges, whom God raised up to deliver his people from those different captivities through which they passed for three hundred and fifty-six years together. But we may find the memory of some of them preserved by those public hymns which were famous throughout the nation, and by those illustrious monuments of their judicial authority which were preserved amongst them, and which kept up a remembrance of them amongst the *Israelites* and the neighbouring nations.

For

For this ought to be observed with care, that since the *Jews* could not invent any thing upon this head, which would not be well known by all the neighbouring nations, as the *Tyrians*, who kept up their own government till *Alexander's* time, who subdued them entirely, and the *Moabites*, whose empire continued for fourteen ages after *Lot's* time, until the destruction of *Jerusalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, it was not easy for any fabulous relations in this matter to obtain authority.

The book of *Ruth* seems not to have any thing considerable, but the conversion of *Ruth*, a *Moabite's*, who relied upon the hopes of the house of *Judah*, out of which she had married her husband. But we may take notice of three things besides: 1. Of the exact practice of that law which obliged them to marry the widow of a relation who died without issue; 2. Of their lively remembrance of the deeds of their ancestors, as of *Judah's* incest with *Thamar*, which was looked upon however as a fountain and a pattern of blessings; 3. Of the lineage of *David*, whom this author represents as deriving his pedigree from a *Moabite's*, which not making much for the honour of a king of *Israel*, does at the same time confirm the truth of the relations which are contained in that book.

The first book of *Samuel* contains the history of *El's* and *Samuel's* judicatures, of the change of the government from a commonwealth to a monarchy under *Saul*, of *David's* anointing, *Saul's* rejection and death.

The second contains the history of *David*, his victories, his design of building a temple, a design which God left to *Solomon* to execute, his wars with the *Ammonites*, his crime with *Bathsheba*, his son *Absalom's* insurrection against him, and his great successes against his enemies. There is nothing in these two books, which has not an exact connexion with what went before, and what follows. One sees throughout, an exact relation to the law of *Moses*; one sees throughout, monuments set up in several places, to preserve the memory of particular actions; one sees also, in the wars of the *Israelites* with their neighbours, a constant series of those old differences which were the fruits of the jealousy of these nations against the children of *Israel*.

The books of the *Kings*, which the *Jews* reckoned but as one book, contain an abridgement of *Solomon's* establishment in the place of *David*, of the glory of his empire, which was carried by *David* to the banks of *Euphrates*, according to the ancient prophecies; of his marriage with the king of *Egypt's* daughter; of the building of the temple, and his own palace, with the help of *Hiram*, king of *Tyre*: one sees the manner of the queen of *Sheba's* visit to *Solomon*, of his alliances with the *Moabites*, the *Ammonites*, the *Edomites*, the *Zidonians*, and the *Hittites*; thinking by these marriages to have put an end to the old quarrels between his people and these nations, who were jealous of the people of *Israel*. All this was done in the forty years of *Solomon's* reign; and as there never was so famous a reign in *Judea*, so never was there any, of which there are left so many monuments, as well there, as in the neighbouring countries.

One sees afterwards, in the same book, the division of *Solomon's* empire into two governments, that of *Judah*, which continued from *Solomon's*

son's death, during the reign of eighteen successors, for three hundred eighty-six years, to the taking of *Jerusalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*; and that of *Israel* formed by *Jeroboam*, which lasted two hundred fifty-four years, under the reign of nineteen successors, until the taking of *Samaria*, the capital city of the kingdom of *Israel*.

The history of the *Chronicles*, which was written about twenty-six years after that of the *Kings*, carries the history down to *Cyrus*, the founder of the empire of *Persia*, who gave the *Jews* their liberty again. The books of *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* contain the history of what passed under his successors, to the time of *Artaxerxes*, for almost eighty-two years.

It was in this interval that the deliverance happened which the *Jews* received under *Esther*, wife to one of the most powerful kings of *Persia*, the memory of which the *Jews* celebrate every year in all places, the thirteenth and fourteenth days of the month *Adar*, (which answers to our *February*) by virtue of *Esther's* law.

After these general remarks, with which I shall content myself at present, I ought to make some reflexions, which cannot be omitted without taking away a great deal of force from those proofs which establish the truth of this matter.

The first is, that as these histories have a necessary relation to the laws of *Moses*, so they could not have been neglected by a people who, in their religious and civil conduct, were absolutely regulated by those very laws.

The second is, that all the actions related in this history, have passed altogether in the bosom of a people, the extent of whose country is not twenty leagues in breadth, nor eighty in length.

The third is, that this people having observed the law of the seventh year, and of the first year, or year of jubilee, (which law you have in the twenty-fifth of *Leviticus*) from their first conquest and division of the country, forty-seven years after their coming out of *Egypt*, this observation has served for a double cycle, to fix the remembrance of those actions, and to make it pass from one generation to another. And so the greatness of that promise which God made to *Hezekiah*, (*Esai.* xxxvii. 30. and *II. Kings* xix. 29.) may easily be understood; that although *Sennacherib's* invasion would, in all probability, lay waste all *Judea*, yet they might eat the fruits of the earth in quietness, the fourteenth year of *Hezekiah*, and the next year they should eat the fruits that would grow up of themselves without tillage, and that on the sixteenth year they should have liberty to till the ground, as formerly; which shews, without any force upon the words, that the fifteenth year of *Hezekiah's* reign was the sabbathical year, in which the *Jews* were forbidden to cultivate the ground.

The fourth is, that it appears in effect, by the series of this whole story, that things were written so as to agree with the public records which were extant amongst the people: this is manifest, if we consider how often the sacred penmen refer us to the histories and annals of those kings of whom they speak, and of whom they only quote the principal stories, in short, in pursuing their design, which was entirely to bring an

account of the state of the religion and the government of the *Jews* and *Israelites*, under one view.

Let us go on to other proofs to establish this truth.

C H A P. II.

That there is a strict Connexion between the Sacred History, and the oldest Monuments which we have of Profane History.

AS there were but few very ancient writers of Profane History, and as we have but small fragments of them dispersed here and there, preserved for the most part by the care of *Josephus* the *Jewish* historian, and of *Eusebius* in his books *De Preparatione Evangelicâ*, so we ought not to be surprised, if but few of the more illustrious passages and events of the *Jewish* history be taken notice of by Pagan writers. The people of *Israel* being otherwise engaged, by the observation of the *Mosaic* law, to keep close to that country where it was established; this made their neighbours have less knowledge of their history.

However, there is enough left to shew with how great fidelity and exactness the sacred writers penned the history of their own nation: in short, we may find amongst the Heathen historians and poets (who were their first historians), several relations which shew that the matters of fact related by the sacred writers, were well enough known to them, and in the same manner that they are related in those historical books which were written after *Moses*.

The memory of *Joshua* and his conquests was famous amongst the Heathens: there are ancient monuments extant which prove that the *Carthaginians* were a colony of the *Tyrians*, who escaped from *Joshua*; as also that the inhabitants of *Leptis* in *Africa* came originally from the *Zidonians*, who forsook their country, because of the miseries which afflicted it.

The fable of the *Phœnician Hercules* arose from the history of *Joshua* (f); the overthrow of the giants, and the famous *Typhon*, owe their original to the overthrow of *Og* the king of *Basban*, and of the *Anakims*, who were called giants (g).

The tempest of hail spoken of in the eleventh of *Joshua*, was transformed by the poets into a tempest of stones, with which, as they say, *Jupiter* overwhelmed the enemies of *Hercules* in *Arim*, which is exactly the country where *Joshua* fought with the children of *Anak*.

One finds the memorial of the actions of *Joshua* preserved by *Sancho-niathon*, a *Tyrian* writer, who lived soon after him, and whose antiquity is attested by *Porphyrus*.

(f) *Procop. Vandalicorum*, lib. ii. c. 10.

(g) *Polybius*, Frag. cxiv. *Sallust. de Bello Jugurthino*.

One finds, in the manner of *Jephtha's* sacrificing his daughter after his victory over the *Ammonites*, the original of the sacrificing of *Iphigenia*; it being usual with the Heathens, as *Ælian* judiciously observes (*h*), to attribute to their later heroes the glory of the actions of those who lived long before.

We have an account of a feast which was observed by the Heathen Romans in *April*, the time of the *Jewish* harvest, in which they let loose foxes with torches fastened to their tails, which certainly came from the story of *Sampson*, and was brought into *Italy* by the *Phœnicians* (*i*).

One finds, in the same history of *Sampson* and *Delilah*, the original of the story of *Nisus* and his daughter, who cut off those fatal hairs upon which the victory depended (*k*).

Nicolaus Damascenus has preserved the account of the victory which *David* obtained over the *Syrians* of *Zoba*, upon the banks of the *Euphrates*, as it is described by the sacred writers (*l*).

There are monuments extant which describe the part which *Hiram* king of *Tyre* had in the building of the temple of *Solomon*, almost the same with the account which the sacred authors give us of his part in the erection of that great work.

One finds in *Herodotus* an account of the taking of *Jerusalem* by *Sesstris*, king of *Egypt*, as it is described in the history of *Rehoboam* (*m*).

One finds the history of the kings of *Syria* related by *Nicolaus Damascenus* in the same manner as it is described by the sacred writers, when they give us an account of the victories which the kings of *Syria* obtained over the kings of *Samaria*.

One finds that the story of *Phaëton* is solely founded upon the translation of *Elijah* in a chariot of fire (*n*).

All that I have taken notice of, happened before the time of the first *Olympiad*, from whence the learned *Varro* has observed that the first knowledge of history began amongst the *Greeks*; whence also it is that they call all the precedent time fabulous, the *Greeks* having before nothing but fables, into which they had turned whatever ancient history they were acquainted with.

Since that time, we do not find fewer marks of the truth of the sacred histories.

One sees in the Pagan writers the reign of *Tiglab-Pileser*, who is the same with the younger *Ninus*; as also the destruction of the *Syrian* monarchy by his means, as it is described to us in the sacred historians. *Nicholas Damascenus* in *Josephus*, *Antiq. lib. vii. cap. 6*.

One sees amongst the Heathens, the succession of *Shalmaneser* as it is described in the Scriptures (*o*).

One sees the manner of *Sennacherib's* conquering the most part of the towns

(*h*) *Varia Historia*, lib. v. cap. 3.

(*i*) *Ovid. Fastorum* lib. iv.

(*l*) *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. vii. cap. 6.

(*m*) *Joseph. Antiq.* lib. vii. cap. 6.

(*n*) *II. Kings* ii.

(*k*) *Ovid. Metam.* lib. viii. fab. i.

(*o*) *Cass. in Euseb.*

towns of *Palestina*, of *Tyre* and *Sidon*, described in Heathen writers, particularly as we have it in the Scriptures (p).

The manner of *Sennacherib's* succession to *Sbalmaneser*, of his desolating the country of *Palestine* while he carried on his victories, is described by the Heathens, *Herodot. lib. ii.* & *Berosus in Josephus, lib. x. c. i.* exactly as the sacred historians relate it.

The memory of *Tirhakah* king of *Æthiopia*, as of a great conqueror, is preserved amongst the Heathens (q); for it was his coming, in short, which obliged *Sennacherib* to arise from before *Libna*, whence he intended to go and besiege *Jerusalem*.

One finds amongst the Heathens the remembrance of the manner of the destruction of all *Sennacherib's* army, for his blasphemies against God, which the *Egyptians* disguised, to appropriate to themselves. *Herodot. lib. ii. cap. 141.*

One finds the ruin of *Ashdod* by king *Psammeticus* described by Heathen authors, as we have it in the sacred Scriptures. *Herod. lib. ii. (r).*

One finds an account of the ways by which the *Medes* lost the empire of *Asia* under *Cyaxares*, after his conquests over the *Assyrians*, in the Heathen writers, much the same as it is described in *Nabum. ii. 5.*

The account of the taking of *Ninive* by *Nabopolassar*, and by *Assyages*, is much the same in Heathen authors (s) with the description of it in *Nabum, Esaiab, and Ezekiel.*

The manner of *Josiah's* undertaking a war against *Pharaoh-Necho*, king of *Egypt*, when he was overthrown in the plains of *Megiddo*, as it is described by the Heathens (t), agrees with the relation which is given of it in the holy Scriptures.

The victories of *Nebuchadnezzar* over the *Egyptians* and the *Jews*, the carrying away of the consecrated vessels of the temple, and of the *Jews* to *Babylon* (u), are described by the Heathens.

The manner of the yielding up of *Tyre* to *Nebuchadnezzar*, as they describe it (x), agrees with what *Ezekiel* says, chap. xxviii. 18. 19.

One finds in Heathen authors an account of the stately buildings of *Babylon* by *Nebuchadnezzar* (y), which is described exactly in the Scriptures.

One finds also in them (z), that the death of *Pharaoh-Hophra* or *Vaphres*, as they call him, happened according to *Jeremiah's* predictions, chap. xl. 30.

One finds also the taking of *Babylon*, by *Cyrus* (a), as it is described by the Prophet *Jeremiah*, chap. li. 46.

One finds also that the death of *Belsazzar* (b) happened exactly as *Daniel* described it, chap. v.

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(p) *Menander* apud *Joseph. lib. ix. cap. ult.*

(q) *Strabo, lib. i. & xv.*

(r) *Herodot. lib. i. cap. 104. lib. ii. cap. 1. lib. vii. cap. 10.*

(s) *Alexand. Polyhistor. ap. Syncellum.*

(t) *Herodot. lib. ii.*

(u) *II. Kings. iii. 29, 30.*

(x) *Annal. Phœnic. ap. Joseph. lib. i. contra Apionem.*

(y) *Beros. Abyden.*

(z) *Herodot. lib. ii. cap. 163. & 169.*

(a) *Herodot. lib. i. cap. 178.*

(b) *Xenophon. Hæstor. lib. vii.*

One sees there an account of *Xerxes's* great undertaking against Greece (c), as *Daniel* had foretold it, chap. xi.

Here then is an agreement which is perfect enough in several articles, to which we might add a greater number, if we had a greater number of Pagan historians : but as we cannot find, after the reign of *Artaxerxes Longimanus*, histories amongst the *Jews* of equal authority with those which were written by and after *Moses*, as *Josephus* the *Jewish* historian observes, so we cannot compare the *Jewish* and Pagan histories together afterwards, in that form we have done hitherto.

But it is easy to observe four things, which are very considerable, upon this head.

I. That the credit of the sacred historians may be grounded upon the great number of remarks we have made already, or else nothing will ever establish it. For how can we conceive that all sorts of historians, of all nations and all ages, *Babylonians*, *Assyrians*, *Tyrians*, *Egyptians*, and *Greeks*, could agree so exactly with the *Jews*, in those facts they relate, if the *Jewish* authors had not exactly followed the rules of truth ?

II. That as the prophecies of *Zechariah* and *Daniel* describe, with an almost incredible exactness, the considerable events which happened in the countries near to *Judea*, and in *Judea* itself, in a time which was not expired until the sacred writers had given over writing amongst the *Jews*, so there was need of almost nothing else, but to look over the books of *Daniel*, to see what happened from day to day. And here we may observe, that the reason why *Porphyry* thought the book of *Daniel* was forged after the time of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, was, because this book seemed to him to be rather a history than a prediction ; which he justified, in making a sort of commentary upon this prophecy, by comparing with it the Pagan historians which were then extant.

III. That as the *Jewish* commonwealth came under the power of the *Greeks*, who were masters of learning, and of the art of writing histories, so there is little need of any other witnesses beside the *Greek* authors, as *Josephus* demonstrates, in effect, by proving that the *Greeks* were well enough acquainted with the affairs of the *Jewish* nation.

IV. That we do really find, after the time of *Artaxerxes*, a very great part of the *Jewish* history composed by the care of some particular men, with sufficient exactness, though it be not of equal authority with the sacred writers.

C H A P. III.

That there is an uninterrupted Series of Events foretold by the sacred Oracles, of which we may see a very great Number accomplished in every Age.

AS we may very reasonably say, that all the history of the people of *Israel* has a very exact dependance upon the writings of that famous legislator ; so we may also observe, that there are scarce any con-

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siderable

(c) *Herod.* lib. vii. cap. 5, 6.

considerable events which make up the body of this history, which do not deserve a particular remark, either as a fulfilling of *Moses's* prophecies, or of those other Prophets whom God raised up after him to reform the errors of that nation. And it is a very considerable thing, that in all the series of events foretold by the Prophets, there was not one generation amongst all the offspring of the people, but what saw the accomplishment of several of those oracles. A little attention and care in comparing the chronology of the oracles with that of the events, will sufficiently justify what I say. I shall content myself with observing their different orders, which will satisfy a judicious reader, since my design does not engage me necessarily to do a thing which would carry me too far, and which may be done with little application.

We may consider four sorts of oracles: 1. those which have respect to particular facts nigh at hand; 2. those which have respect to particular facts, but at a greater distance; 3. those which have respect to facts which belong to the whole *Jewish* nation; 4. those which have respect to facts which belong to foreign nations, either bordering upon *Palestina*, or further from it. Now there is nothing so exactly fulfilled, as those four sorts of oracles.

You have, for particular facts, which were nigh at hand, and foretold by the Prophets, the oracle of *Moses* concerning the advancement of *Jeshua*, and the conquest of *Palestine*, which happened soon after.

You have *Deborah's* oracle of the victory promised to *Barak*.

You have *Samuel's* oracle of the advancement and rejection of *Saul*.

You have an oracle of the same *Samuel*, of the advancement of *David*.

You have *Nathan's* oracle concerning *Absalom's* revolt.

You have *Abijah's* oracle concerning the advancement of *Jeroboam*, and the division of *Salamon's* kingdom into ten tribes, and into two tribes, whereof the lesser part was to continue in the possession of *Solomon's* heirs.

You have *Abijah's* prediction of the death of *Jeroboam's* son.

You have a prediction of the advancement of *Jehu* in the place of *Jezebel* king of *Israel*.

You have *Elijah's* prediction of the exemplary punishment of *Ahab* and *Jezabel*.

You have the prediction of *Jeboiakim's* death made by *Jeremiah*, chap. xxii. 18, 19. and chap. xxxvi. 30. which happened ten years after.

You have the prediction of *Jechoniah's* miseries made by *Jeremiah*, chap. xxii. 3.

You have *Jeremiah's* prediction of the death of the false Prophet *Ananias*, but seven months before it happened.

You have an express designation of *Zorobabel* to conclude the rebuilding of the temple, made by *Zechariah*, chap. iv. 9. and which was completed in four years.

It is therefore fully evident, that the prediction of particular facts, which were to happen in a very short time, served to establish the authority of the Prophets. And in effect one sees that they proceeded upon

upon the authority which those predictions of nearer events gave them, to foretell other particular events at a greater distance.

So you see that *Moses* foretold after a sort, after *Jacob*, the manner how the land of *Canaan* was to be divided, though the thing was to be done by *Lot*.

You see the same *Moses* foretelling the several captivities which the people of *Israel* suffered after the conquest, and the method of God's raising up several judges, to the number of fourteen, to bring them out of those calamities.

You see the same *Moses* foretelling that the temple should be built in the tribe of *Benjamin*, though it was the least.

You have *Joshua's* prediction of the way how the rebuilder of *Jericho* should be exemplarily punished; which was accomplished in *Ahab's* time, (1. Kings xvi. 34.) about 570 years after this prophetic imprecation of *Joshua*.

You have the prediction of a Prophet, who was contemporary to *Jeroboam*, about the birth of *Joshiah*, which was not till 350 years after, (1. Kings xiii.) and of the manner of his destroying the altar which *Jeroboam* built.

One sees a prediction of the overthrow of the kingdom of *Samaria*, within 65 years, by *Isaiah*, in the reign of *Jotham*.

One sees the destruction of *Jerusalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, foretold by several of the Prophets.

One sees the taking of *Tyre* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, foretold by *Isaiah*, chap. xxiii. 15, 17.

One sees the promise of its re-establishment, seventy years after its destruction.

One sees the promise of *Cyrus's* birth made by *Isaiah*, chap. xlv. 45. as of one that should restore liberty to the *Jews*, and give them opportunities of rebuilding their temple at *Jerusalem*.

One sees the prediction of the manner how *Antiochus Epiphanes* would treat the *Jews* in his life time, and how he should be punished for his cruelties and sacrileges.

One sees the prediction of the courage of the *Maccabees*, who should oppose the tyranny of that prince, and purify anew the Divine worship.

So that it is plain, that the foretelling of these particular facts, which were at so great a distance, revived the memory of these Prophets amongst the *Jews* in every age, and made them read them with a singular attention.

One ought also to make the same reflexion upon those oracles which have respect to the particular events of the state of the *Jews*, and its continuance until the time of the *Messiah*, after which the Prophets foretel its ruin and destruction without remedy.

In short, one may say, that there was no revolution, never so little considerable, of which we do not find very many and very particular predictions foretold by several Prophets, upon very different occasions, and particular circumstances.

One sees in the books of *Moses* exact descriptions of the pilgrimages of *Abraham's* posterity, of their continuance in *Egypt*, of the oppression they were there to undergo, of their prodigious increase, of their rob-

bing the *Egyptians* at their departure, of their methods in conquering the land of *Canaan*, of the way how kings should arise from *Abraham*; which was accomplished in the *Ishmaelites* and *Edomites*, and at last in the *Israelites*.

One sees exprefs predictions of the feveral judges whom God should raife up to the people of *Israel*.

One sees an exprefs prediction of the advancement of the tribe of *Judah* to the kingdom.

One sees a prediction of the future fubjection of the *Edomites* to the power of the kings of *Judah*, and of their conquering of the countries which lie along the banks of *Euphrates*, which was fulfilled in *David's* time.

One sees an exprefs division of that kingdom into two very unequal parts.

One sees great numbers of predictions concerning the state of the kings of *Judah* and *Israel*: for instance, you have an oracle concerning the destruction of *Jehu's* family in the fourth generation (*d*).

The destruction of the kingdom of the ten tribes is exprefsly foretold, and the term is very exactly fet down.

The ruin of *Jerusalem*, and of his kings, is also exprefsly foretold.

The time of the captivity of the *Jews* in *Babylon*, and

Their re-establishment by *Cyrus* after seventy years, are also very distinctly foretold.

The desolation of *Judea* under the empire of *Alexander's* successors, is foretold very exactly.

Their re-establishment after these desolations, and the way by which they were to be defended by the *Maccabees*, who should become their kings, is likewise foretold.

In fhort, one sees exprefs predictions of the ruin of *Jerusalem*, and of the whole nation under the *Roman* empire, after the coming of the *Messiah*.

As the people of *Israel* had always great quarels with the neighbouring nations, fo one finds that amongst the oracles which particularly regard the state of the *Jews*, the Prophets have interwoven a great number which concern those strange people, with relation to those differences which were kept up between the people of *Israel* and them.

So one sees the *Egyptians* and the *Canaanites* punished, in the execution of the oracles pronounced against the descendants of *Cham*.

One sees the prediction of the ruin of *Benhadad*, king of *Syria*, and of his house, foretold to the tenth generation.

One sees the prediction of the ruin of *Egypt* and *Tyre*, which happened under *Nebuchadnezzar*.

One sees the prediction of the ruin of the *Moabites*, which was under the same *Nebuchadnezzar*, after that kingdom had subsisted almost fourteen ages from its first foundation.

One sees frequent oracles concerning the ruin of *Nineveh*, and its empire.

One sees oracles concerning the ruin of *Babylon*, which happened under *Cyrus*.

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One sees oracles of the destruction of the *Persian* empire by *Alexander*.

One sees oracles concerning the manner of this prince's conquering the greatest part of the world, and of his leaving his empire divided into four kingdoms.

One sees frequent oracles concerning the state of the empire of the *Seleucidae*, and the *Ptolemies*, who had particular quarrels with the *Jewish* commonwealth.

One sees the alliances which were to be between the two kingdoms foretold, and the small success which should arise thence in terminating their differences.

One sees predictions of the treatment which the *Jews* should meet with in those kingdoms.

One sees a prediction of the retreat which *Egypt* was to give to the *Jews*, and of the temple they were to build there.

One sees an exact prediction of the manner of the profanation of the temple by *Antiochus Epiphanes*, for three years together.

One sees the prediction of the ruin of these two governments by the arms of the *Roman* empire.

It is very natural to make some reflexions upon such a various multitude of oracles.

I. That there are no books in the world which are formed like those which we find in the hands of the *Jews*.

One finds there a history exactly pursued, and in a natural dependance, from the beginning of the world, for 3500 years.

One finds there a series of oracles which foretell all sorts of events, so inseparably united with the history, that it is impossible to find by what means the prophecies could have been so brought to support the history, and the history to support the authority of the prophecies.

One finds oracles so clear, and so particular, especially in the book of *Daniel*, that *Porphyry*, a mortal enemy to the Christians, was forced to assert, that the book of *Daniel* was forged after *Antiochus Epiphanes*'s time: a ridiculous imagination! for this prophecy was translated into *Greek* more than one hundred years before, and was in the hands, not only of the *Jews*, but of the *Egyptians* also, mortal enemies to the whole *Jewish* nation.

This also is very surprising, that since the *Jews*, after their dispersion, preserve these histories, wherever they are, as the accomplishments of the oracles, and these oracles as predictions of those events of which their history is very full, they should never think of proposing to us any books of a like nature, considering that now, for one and twenty ages, they have had no parallel authors, who have both writ history, and pronounced oracles.

II. But, as these reflexions lead us on to others, so we ought to enter upon them, by considering what the most unreasonable obstinacy can oppose to the authority of the Historical and Prophetical Books of Scripture.

C H A P. IV.

That how common soever Oracles may have been amongst the Pagans, yet nothing amongst them can justly be compared with those which are found amongst the Jews.

ONE of the greatest objections which can in all probability be made against this surprising series of Oracles, which are found in the books of the Old Testament, is taken from that great number of Oracles which are found amongst the Pagans. This objection deserves to be considered, because it will more clearly demonstrate the authority of the Prophetical books which are in the hands of the Jews.

I confess there have been false prophets: and indeed, since God has given us marks to distinguish them from true ones, which may be seen in the books of *Moses*, it cannot be denied but there have been some false prophets; and that, moreover, the history of the Prophets discovering to us impostors frequently, we may freely acknowledge, that amongst the Pagans, and the people bordering upon *Judea*, there have been men who have boasted of predictions of things to come, as well as amongst the Jews.

I confess also, that some Heathen writers speak of certain oracles, which in all appearance are very well circumstantiated, and of which they relate a very exact accomplishment.

But several things ought to be observed upon this argument, which deserve an attentive consideration.

I. We see that their most celebrated things have been only an imitation of what was done amongst the Jews. The *Egyptians* imitated the *Urim* and the *Thummim* of the Jewish high priest; and they appropriated to him the right of giving oracles: and so we see they are given by a voice from heaven, which the Jews saw was granted to their Prophets. We may see it in the history of *Socrates's* life, and in *Apuleius*, p. 339.

II. We see that the same Pagan historians take notice that very many, even the greatest part of their oracles, were very ambiguous and false. The philosophers, and *Tully* particularly, openly laughed at them (*Lib. I. II. de Divinatione*). They thought it a ridiculous thing, that *Apollon Delpheus*, the god of poetry, should give his answers in very bad verse, and at last be reduced to prose. *Eusebius* quotes a discourse of *Oenomaus*, a Greek philosopher, who wrote against oracles, to decry them as impostures.

III. We see that those oracles which had acquired the greatest reputation by their accomplishment, were borrowed from the Prophets of the synagogues. We have an illustrious example in the birth of *Cyrus*, which the Prophet *Isaiah* had foretold, about the year of the world 3292, and concerning which they pretend to shew prophecies of *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Craesus*, about the year 3492 (e); which shews, that if the thing

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(e) *Abydenus*. *Herodot. lib. i. cap. 55. & 91.*

was really known to them, they could not have known it but by the prophetic writings which were amongst the *Jews*, and which could not have been concealed from them, because the *Jews* read them with care, to comfort themselves under that captivity to which they were reduced by *Nebuchadnezzar*.

IV. It is in effect proved by examining their oracles, most of which were either false or forged. This *Eusebius* has clearly proved, [*de Preparat. Evangelicâ, lib. ix. cap. 5.*] The proverb of the *Sibyl's* or *Daphnic* priestess's favouring of *Philip*, is commonly known. It was easy for these Heathen princes to bias their people with such predictions. But what *Eusebius* says (*f*), puts the thing beyond all question; for he expressly shews, that when the priests were put to the rack, they confessed the whole contrivance of those oracles, which they pronounced to abuse the credulity of the people.

We ought to observe, that we cannot find great numbers of oracles upon the same subject; whereas one sees that the Prophets followed (as it were) *Moses's* model of the state of the commonwealth of the *Jews*, and that they frequently concur in foretelling the same facts from one generation to another.

VI. We ought to remember that these oracles were not kept within the limits of one single state or nation.

VII. It may be said that they were not publicly known, having been only proposed in private places, before a very few, and, in short, that they were not actually known to the most part of the neighbouring people; whereas one sees that the *Jewish* Prophets gave their oracles in the most solemn assemblies; and when they were committed to writing, they were known to all those who had any commerce with that nation. So that *Isaiah's* prophecies were questionless known to *Nebuchadnezzar* and *Cyrus*, who looked upon himself as designed by God to restore their liberty to the *Jews*. We may make the same judgment of the book of *Daniel*, which was known to *Alexander* without all question, as one may collect from the favourable reception the *Jews* found from him.

VIII. We ought to observe, that these pretended oracles were given, for the most part, in favour of those princes who could satisfy the greediness of the priests. Whereas the Prophets among the *Jews* lived in the most disinterested manner in the world, and usually pronounced nothing but reproaches and menaces of cruel calamities to those princes who had the government in their hands. Their ministry consisted in a courageous opposition to the corruptions in their laws and their religion, and in censuring their princes and governors with a singular intrepidity; and, indeed, we see that most of them met with the punishment of their boldness, and made trial of the most cruel tortures.

IX. Last of all, we ought to take notice, that as the oracles which are mentioned in Heathen authors, were only of facts of small importance to those people amongst whom it is said that they were pronounced, so we do not find that they thought themselves much concerned in their preservation; whereas one sees that the *Jewish* nation were so persuaded of the truth of those oracles with which they were entrusted, that nothing to this very day could ever oblige them to discontinue the reading

ing of them, whatever disputes they may otherwise have with the Christians, who make use of them to establish their pretensions, notwithstanding *all the claims* of the synagogue.

When this is laid down, it would seem as if I might reasonably conclude, that the wonderful variety of oracles which are to be found amongst the *Jews*, cannot be at all weakened by those oracles of which we find so frequent mention in Pagan writers.

But we ought to go further, in explaining two things, which will perfectly clear this matter; one is, that the Historical and Prophetical Books of the Old Testament after *Moses*, can be no forgeries; the other is, that in truth, those Oracles which we find inserted in those books, could not possibly have been forged after their completion.

C H A P. V.

That the Books in which we may find these Oracles, were never forged.

I HAVE observed formerly, that it is absolutely necessary that the authority of those Books in which these Oracles are inserted, be established, before we can build upon the authority of the Oracles. And, indeed, if we cannot clearly shew that these Books were written, and publicly known, before the things happened which are said to be accomplishments of those preceding Oracles, it would be natural to call in question the authority of these Oracles. But it is very easy to satisfy an equitable reader herein, and to establish in general, or severally, the existence of these prophetical writings, before the times in which those facts happened, which we propose as the accomplishment of those prophecies.

I shall make use of two sorts of reflexions to establish my proposition. The first consists in general considerations upon the books themselves: the second has respect to particular facts, which are uncontested, and whence the same truth very naturally results.

I. We ought to observe, that whereas, in *Genesis*, *Moses* makes use of no other *epocha* to fix the time of any event, but the years of the life of some famous Patriarch: as, for instance, he fixes the flood to the 600 year of *Noah's* age; in *Exodus* and *Numbers* (g) he uses the time of their coming out of *Egypt* for his *epocha*; in the books of the following authors, the years from their departure out of *Egypt* were carefully set down till the fourth year of king *Solomon's* reign, which was 480 years after their departure. This was a character to fix the time of all those who lived after that *epocha*.

II. The building of the temple began a new *epocha* amongst the *Jews*, as appears from II. *Chron.* viii. 1. though they began after that time to reckon by the years of the kings of *Judah* and *Israel*, as appears by the books

(g) *Exod.* xix. *Numb.* xxxiii. 38.

books of the first Prophets ; which is a character sufficiently certain, to distinguish those who lived after *Solomon*, with the time when they lived.

III. It is plain that the *Babylonish* captivity, and afterwards their subjection to the *Persian* empire, obliged them to fix their events, and to date their prophecies, by the years of the governments of those foreign kings. [See *Daniel*, *Ezekiel*, *Zechariah*, and *Haggai*.] So the author of the book of *Maccabees* refers to the years of the *Seleucides*. Now, that we may the better perceive the force of this observation, we must remember three things. 1. That the authors who lived after the carrying away of the *Jews* into *Babylon*, make use of some *Chaldee* terms, which are not to be found in the foregoing prophets ; for we may see in the books of *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, and *Malachi*, the same style with *Ezra*, *Nehemiah*, and *Daniel* (b). 2. The authors of these books give names to the months, which they had not before the captivity. The *Jews* only called their months, first, and second, &c. and so they gave names which were unheard of before (i). 3. The authors of these prophecies take particular notice of any newly-instituted fasts ; thus we see that the Prophet *Haggai* mentioned those fasts of which we have nothing in the law, but which were instituted during the captivity.

We must blind ourselves of purpose, to conceive that any impostor could forge books which have so exact a relation, and such certain characteristics, to fix them to the time in which every author lived, and to the circumstances wherein he wrote. We must of necessity grant, that, before such an impostor could bring about such a design, he must have made himself master of the whole profane history, to fix so exactly the history of the *Jewish* nation, and of those oracles which have been given in circumstances which are unintelligible without the help of profane histories of different nations.

I come now to facts which cannot be contested. It is sufficient that those facts be acknowledged as true, to establish in general the truth of those books whereof we teach.

I. It cannot be denied, that the *Jews* preserve these oracles to this day with great fidelity.

II. It cannot be denied, that they are in the hands of Christians, who preserve them, as well as the *Jews*, since they have been separated from them ; that is, for almost seventeen ages.

III. It cannot be denied, that these prophecies have been exactly read by the *Jews*, because of those oracles upon which they believe, to this day, that the whole happiness of their nation is founded.

IV. It cannot be denied, that the *Jews* have read these books exactly, to refute the Disciples of Jesus Christ, who have pretended, from the first age of their appearing, that Jesus Christ is the Messiah marked out by these oracles. In short, whereas the Christians pretend to prove by the accomplishment of the ancient oracles, that Jesus Christ was the Messiah ; it is known that the *Jews* endeavour to this day to wrest the sense of these oracles, and to shew that there are many things which are not literally

(b) *Ezech.* xl. 1. *Daniel* x. *Zach.* i. *Hagg.* i.

(i) *Talm. Rosch. Hashanah.* c. i.

rally accomplished, and which by consequence cannot be applied to Jesus Christ.

V. It cannot be denied, that most of the controversies of the *Jews* with the *Christians*, only regard the application of the text of the prophetical authors. The *Christians* explain them in a mystical sense; the *Jews* maintain that they ought to be explained literally.

VI. It cannot be denied that, about 300 years before the birth of our Saviour, the prophetical books were translated, and put into the hands of the *Egyptians*, having been carried to, and translated at *Alexandria*, by a public order of the whole nation, for the satisfaction of a king of *Egypt*. The history of that version which put those sacred books into the hands of the *Greeks*, and the *Jews* who dwelt in *Egypt*, is the most famous thing in the world, and which made those books perfectly known.

Here we have now these books in *Hebrew*, and in *Greek*; that is to say, in the primitive language of the *Jews*, and the vulgar language of the empire which *Alexander* founded.

It is known, that from that time the *Christians* took care to make great numbers of translations into all the vulgar tongues, after the preaching of the gospel; and that they preserved those ancient books as the first elements of their religion.

Now it will be sufficient to acknowledge those truths, to consider,

That those oracles were true which foretold things which happened almost four ages after their prediction. Thus, for instance, the destruction of *Jerusalem*, the overthrow of the *Jewish* state, the calling of the *Gentiles* to the service of the God of *Israel*, the destruction of the *Syrian* and *Egyptian* monarchies, are all contained in the books of *Daniel*, *Haggai*, *Zechariah*, and *Malachi*.

Now there is not more difficulty to conceive that such authors as *Isaiah*, *Amos*, *Joel*, should have foretold the same thing eight or nine hundred years before, than there is to believe that they were foretold by those who lived but little above four ages before they actually came to pass. There is therefore no difficulty in conceiving that these ancient oracles were proposed as we see them, and in those times to which we find them fixed.

But we ought to go further into this matter, and to establish the same thing by the consideration of the things themselves.

I confess that we might have a suspicion of those oracles which are not related upon the faith of a public volume; as, for instance, those of *Elijah*, *Elisha*, and *Uriah* the son of *Shemaiah*, who seem never to have published any thing.

But here we are to observe, 1. That usually the authors who publish the oracles, are not the same with those who tell us of their accomplishment; 2. That the oracles of which we now speak were upon subjects perfectly known, and upon very illustrious exigencies. What more illustrious than the destruction of *Ahab's* family, foretold by *Elijah*? What more extraordinary than the manner of *Jezabel's* death, foretold by the same prophet?

In short, we ought to take notice, I. That these oracles were written for the most part in complete volumes: we have sixteen prophets sufficiently distinguished by their proper volumes.

II. Each

II. Each of these authors has a very different character from the rest; so that some, as *Daniel*, for instance, write in a peculiar language, one part of his book being in *Chaldee*.

III. Every one has some relation to the rest; so those who lived together often treat of the same things: so *Isaiah*, for instance, *Joel*, *Amos*, *Hosea*. But they had separate ideas, and particular oracles, and a turn which perfectly distinguishes them one from another.

IV. One needs only read their works, to find that they wrote in different places. *Amos* was of *Judah*, and went to prophecy in *Israel*; that appears plainly. *Ezekiel* and *Daniel* prophesied in *Chaldea*; that is seen by reading their works.

V. There is a natural dependance between the books of *Moses* and those of the prophets in general; for the prophets were continually reproaching the kings and people with the crimes which they committed against the law of God proposed by *Moses*.

VI. There is a natural dependance between the writings of the former and of the latter prophets. So *Jeremiah* is quoted by *Daniel* (k), as foretelling the time when the desolations of *Jerusalem* were to have an end: this he proposes, not as if he had learnt it by a revelation, but as a thing which he had found out by an attentive examination of the prophecy of *Jeremiah*.

VII. There is an exact connexion of these oracles with the history of the time, which is often interwoven with the prophecies. One sees it in the books of *Isaiah*, *Jeremiah*, and *Daniel*; the other historical books not being altogether so particular as these prophetical books are.

VIII. In short, one sees that these books are interwoven with oracles concerning ancient events, and people which have now no existence; so that hinders us from suspecting any forgery.

I shall not repeat here the common arguments which establish the credit of these books; I brought in most of them, when I established the authority of the books of *Moses*. I shall only make some reflexions here, to establish the same truth.

C H A P. VI.

That the Manner of writing the Prophetical Books of the Old Testament, shews that those Oracles could not have been forged after their Completion.

I HAVE several things to take notice of, to make this truth more sensible. The first is taken from the necessary connexion of all the parts of the history of the Old Testament, the truth of which I have proved by several characters. This history is exactly written by several authors: now the history of the prophets, and of their oracles, is

so exactly framed into the history, that it is impossible to take it out, without confounding the whole.

The books of *Samuel*, which were written by *Samuel*, by *Nathan*, and by *Gad*, as appears by I. *Chron.* xxix. 29. contain the history from the year of the world 2888 to the year 2987.

The books of the *Kings* contain the history of the kings, and of the prophets, from the year 2989 to the year 3442.

The books of the *Chronicles* recapitulate the history, from the beginning of the world to the year 3468.

Ezra writ his history from the year 3468 to the year 3538.

Nehemiah continued it from the year 3550 to the year 3563.

Here is therefore, on the one side, an uninterrupted series of history; and on the other side, a continued succession of prophecies.

David, who began to reign in the year 2950, with several other prophets of that time, writ the most part of the *Psalms*, which are full of oracles, and which were sung by the people, as a part of the divine service.

Isaiah began his prophecy in 3246, and died in the year 3306. *Hosea*, *Micah*, and *Nahum*, were contemporary with him.

Jeremiah began his prophecy in the year 3375, and lived at the same time with *Zephaniah*.

Daniel was carried into *Babylon* in 3401, and prophesied until 3470.

Ezekiel prophesied at *Babylon* in 3509.

Haggai and *Zechariah* prophesied in 3590, soon after *Ezra*, in the time of *Nehemiah*.

Malachi seems to have lived until the year 3589.

Can we therefore in the least imagine that a history should be so intermixed with prophecies and oracles, without conceiving at the same time the truth of both by an invincible necessity?

But we may make a second reflexion hereupon.

There are three general characters which distinguish prophets very sensibly from the generality of authors.

I. They were public censors: let us but read the history of *Isaiah's* conduct, who called all the heads of the people, rulers of *Sodom*; or that of *Jeremiah*, chap. xxxvi, or of any other of the prophets in general.

II. They were comforters of the people, when they had brought them to repentance by their preaching. There are as many instances of this, as there are prophets.

III. They foretold remarkable occurrences, happy or unfortunate, long before there was any probability that they should happen.

It is impossible to consider these characters, without seeing that the state of affairs was that which gave a foundation for their sermons: so that one must of necessity have framed their history of new, to give ground for a forgery. This change in the style of the prophets, follows the circumstances of the *Jewish* state exactly. All that *Isaiah* or *Jeremiah* say, will hold no longer than whilst you suppose the state of the *Jews* to be as corrupt as the history of that time represents it. But if you suppose it to be as the history does distinctly explain it, nothing can be imagined more forcible than their sermons; for as they joined oracles with

with promises in their *thundering* sermons, so one sees that they cannot be parted.

One may make another reflexion upon this matter, by shewing that these oracles and these books were so famous amongst the *Jews*, that no forgery can be supposed.

The times in which they were writ, are a great proof, for they appeared upon very remarkable occasions.

One may rank the prophets into four orders, according to the several times in which they appeared: *David*, and the prophets of his time; those who lived before the *Babylonish* captivity; as *Jonah*, *Hosea*, *Joel*, *Amos*, *Obadiah*, *Isaiah*, *Micah*, *Nahum*, *Habakkuk*, *Zephaniah*, *Jeremiah*.

Those who prophesied during the captivity; *Jeremiah*, *Ezekiel*, and *Daniel*.

Those who lived after their return from *Babylon*; *Haggai*, *Zachariah*, and *Malachi*.

Now we have an equal assurance of all these prophets, that they were famous.

Who can deny the oracles of *David* to have been famous, when they were preserved amongst their public hymns?

One sees that *Micah's* prediction saved *Jeremiah*, whom they would have condemned for prophesying the ruin of the temple under *Jehoiakim*, when *Micah* had prophesied the same thing under *Hezekiah*, that is to say, about one hundred and twenty years before this prediction of *Jeremiah*: here is an event which assures us without affectation, that this prophecy was very well known. Were not therefore the other prophecies, which were in the hands of the *Jews*, very well known by the whole nation?

The other prophets lived in very remarkable times: *Isaiah* under *Jotham*, *Ahaz*, and *Manasseh*, impious princes; the last of which put him to a cruel death, for the freedom of his censures and predictions.

There was, in the time of every prophet, a great number of circumstances which may be enlarged upon, and which will further prove that their works must of necessity have been very public, and very famous amongst the *Jews*.

We must not here neglect what does more particularly regard the persons of the prophets.

I. Some of them were priests, that is to say, public ministers of their religion. *Jeremiah* and *Ezekiel* were of that number: this may be observed in reading of their works, and in observing the nature of their revelations, which were for the most part accommodated by God to those ideas about which the prophets were most employed.

II. Some were very illustrious by their birth: thus *David*, for instance, was king of *Israel*, *Isaiah* was a prince of the blood, and *Daniel* was one of the princes of *Judah*; which may be easily found out by considering the majesty of their style, and greatness of their expressions.

III. Some were very contemptible by their employment, and by their birth: so *Amos*, for instance, and those other prophets whose father is

barely named, without joining to it any honourable title, if the *Jews* observation has any strength.

Now, it is well known, that though the gift of prophecy made him who had it sufficiently famous, yet the character of the person often made the prophecy famous. Sometimes indeed the meanness of the person, as in *Amos*, made the work to be more regarded, every body taking occasion, from the ancient profession of the prophet, to consider the prophecies which he published with more attention.

One ought to observe with care, that those prophets whose writings are preserved, as well as those who did not write, were continually struck at by false prophets, who opposed them with great heat. Since then we have no prophecies preserved but of those whose predictions were accomplished, the event justifying the truth of their predictions, with regard to particular facts near the time which they had foretold to establish their authority; whereas the predictions of others, wanting this character, were neglected, and at last absolutely lost; it appears plainly, that those which remain were things of the greatest reputation among the *Jews*.

Besides, I may add, that one needs only read their books, to see that they not only foretold obscure things, or what particularly concerned their state, but also things of a more splendid nature, the overthrow of kingdoms, of cities, the destruction of whole nations, the destruction of their own city, with its re-establishment; matters which would render their books very illustrious, and which would cause them to be read, not only by the *Jews*, but also by the neighbour nations, the *Ammonites*, *Moabites*, *Assyrians*, *Persians*, *Egyptians*, &c.

Is not this therefore a very particular thing, and that which made the prophets very illustrious, that the great lustre of the prophets continued but for a certain time? There have been none since the year 3553. Their glory appeared in the history of eight ages; but it does not extend itself any farther. Now why, I pray, should there be no impostors after *Molochi*, as well as there were impostors before him?

One may imagine, perhaps, that the prophecies were immediately dispersed, some being uttered in one place, and some in another: some in the kingdom of *Judah*, and others in the kingdom of *Israel*; some in *Babylon*, others in *Egypt*; which might give opportunities for impostors. But,

I. This objection may be strongly retorted back: for how can we conceive, that in the division which separated the *Israelites* from the *Jews*, those of *Judah* would charge themselves with the writings published in a kingdom so much an enemy to them, without examination, when every thing which comes from thence ought to appear suspected?

II. They were all collected into particular volumes. But the prophecies of *Hosea*, *Isaiah*, and *Jeremy*, and the most considerable of the rest, are preserved in books which contain many other things.

III. They are all exactly joined with the history of the same nation, each one in a place where there was an equal concern to preserve, and to gather them together. But besides, they were all collected into one body. In short, the seventy-two Interpreters translated them into *Greek* in

in the year of the world 3727, and so submitted them to the examination of the *Egyptians*; and this also keeps us from doubting of their truth.

This translation was made but one hundred thirty and eight years after *Malachi*, the last of the prophets.

But what judgment soever may be made of these reflexions, the design whereof is only to establish the reputation of these prophecies, and of the books wherein they are written, that so no room may be left for any suspicions of forgery; I shall add two considerations to what I have said already, which ought to appear convincing to every attentive man.

I. One can suspect none but the *Jews* as forgers of these oracles. Now, not to say any thing of the absurdity of supposing that a whole nation should have subscribed to such an imposture, all the *Jews* throughout the world were, after their return from the captivity, strongly prepossessed with an opinion of the Messiah's being a great temporal king; and they have the same belief to this very hour, in all places of the world, wherever they are dispersed.

This being once laid down, I affirm it to be impossible that the *Jews* should forge oracles which assert expressly, that the Messiah should be put to death in so very odious a manner; for, as I shall afterwards shew, the oldest doctors attributed to the Messiah all those oracles which speak of the death of the Messiah according to the Christians, and which they themselves in process of time were forced to interpret of two Messiahs, one exposed to a world of miseries, and the other only glorious: or at least, I may say it is impossible that the *Jews* should consent to a forgery which thwarted their common ideas and pretensions in so very sensible a manner.

II. The second consideration establishes the same truth with no less firmness, which is, that the Call of the Gentiles to have a share in the blessings of the covenant which God made with the people of *Israel*, was the thing in the world from which the *Jews* had the greatest aversion; they looked upon the blessings which the Messiah was to communicate, as advantages entirely reserved for those of their own nation. How then can we conceive that the *Jews* should forge so many oracles which should thwart their prejudices so sensibly? or how can we imagine that a whole people would authorize with their approbation an imposture so contrary, and so very opposite to their own opinions?

But it is no hard thing to imagine, that when the *Jews* were once persuaded of the authority of their prophets, either by their miracles, or by the ready accomplishment of every oracle which they had publicly pronounced, they should receive their books with a profound submission, and preserve them with the utmost care. But it appears to be an incomprehensible thing, for a people to receive impostures contrary to their prejudices, and impostures reiterated so often, without any ground; but what a vast number of records never before heard of would produce.

But I suppose these reflexions will suffice to establish the truth of the historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament: so that there will be no need of alledging particular proofs, which might demonstrate

the truth of each book in particular, which would carry me out to too great a length.

I shall now consider the oracles themselves, and I shall shew the progress of the light of this revelation, with respect to the promise of the Messiah. That this progress may be the better observed, I shall do three things, as I have formerly observed, without which the mind of a wise reader will not receive satisfaction.

I. I shall explain in a few words the reason why these oracles are interwoven with several histories or prophecies which seem to have no relation to the promise of the Messiah.

II. I shall give such rules as will serve to justify the application which both *Jews* and *Christians* have equally made of several oracles only to the Messiah.

III. I shall set the oracles according to the order of time, which will manifest the advancement and progress of that light which is to be found in the revelation itself: as, indeed, it is natural to conceive that God should explain himself more clearly in this matter, in proportion as the things themselves were nearer to their completion.

C H A P. VII.

For what Reason the Oracles which relate to the Messiah, were interwoven with other Things which seem to be very widely distant.

ONE of the greatest difficulties which may be raised against the oracles of the Old Testament which concern the Messiah, is that surprising mixture which one sees of those oracles, and of other subjects which seem to be widely distant from any idea of the Messiah.

There are none so profane as to deny, that if in the same author, and in the same chapter, any man should read in one continued series predictions which should explain the miraculous birth of the Messiah, his family, his preaching, his miracles, his sufferings, his resurrection, his ascension into Heaven, the sending of the Holy Ghost, the calling of the *Gentiles*, but that the history of the gospel would sufficiently justify Jesus Christ to be the promised Messiah.

But they take it to be a very strange thing, that the apostles should apply several passages in ancient authors to the history of Jesus Christ, though the whole contexture of their books do not seem to oblige us to make any such interpretations.

They therefore suppose that the apostles made several fortunate allusions to the more remarkable passages in those ancient authors, which may pass for predictions of those events which afterwards happened; just as *Nonnus* wrote the history of the gospel in *Homer's* verses, and as *Bu-*

doxia made a *Cento* out of *Virgil's* poem, which contained the same history, though neither *Homer* nor *Virgil* had any of the mysteries of the Christian religion then in view.

That this apparent difficulty may be solved, it will be necessary to examine three things : I. The matter of fact itself. II. The reasons which gave occasion for the doing of it. III. The impression which this fact has produced in the minds of men, to this very time.

For the first: Though it is well known that common use does not allow men to join foreign ideas in the same discourse, yet we may easily conceive that God might and ought to do it, if we will allow what may be easily collected, that he resolved to send the Messiah into the world : such a practice was the more natural, because the ancient Patriarchs before *Moses*, and *Moses* himself, who formed the commonwealth of the *Jews*, had prepared the minds of the people to such sort of expressions as were raised above the present subject.

And certainly, if one takes but the pains to consider the wisdom and beauty of the authors who writ these prophetic books on the one side, and the character of the writers of the New Testament on the other, he would perceive, that if these words, *That it might be fulfilled*, were of necessity to be changed into these, *As one may perceive a sort of completion of such or such passages in the Old Testament*, yet, notwithstanding that, the most part of those quotations would evince an exact accomplishment, and the oracles which they alledge would bear a just proportion to those events which are related by the evangelists in our Saviour's life.

Can any thing be more singular than the prophecy in the seventh of *Isaiah*, of the Messiah's being born of a virgin; of the piercing of his hands and feet, *Psal.* xxii. of the mixture of gall which was offered him to drink, hinted at, *Psal.* lx. 22. of his being sold for thirty pieces of silver, *Zechar.* xi. 3. or than several others of a like nature, which at present I shall not stand to reckon up?

It must be confessed, however, that these oracles are interwoven for the most part with matters relating to events happening in the time when each prophet lived, or which seem to be applicable personally to the prophets.

Three orders or reasons may be conceived, which will justify the wisdom of God in the ordering of these oracles in a way which seems so contrary to the common practice of the world.

The first order contains reasons drawn from the person of the Messiah himself, of whom we speak.

The second order contains those which arise from the consideration of the people amongst whom the Messiah was to be born.

The third contains those reasons which respect other nations amongst whom the Messiah was to be preached. I shall examine these three sorts by themselves; and I hope that we may gather from thence, that the eternal wisdom presided over this mixture of these oracles which relate to the Messiah, with other ideas which seem to be wholly foreign to the subject.

In short, it may be urged, that the belief of a Messiah formed of so apparent contradictions, cannot easily be received of the sudden : a

Messiah of the seed of *David*, whom *David* calls his *Lord*; a Messiah who complains that he is *foraken by God*, whom however he ought to adore; a Messiah born with the weakneses of youth, who at the same time is called a *mighty God*, and the *father of eternity*, &c.

However, these ideas which seem to oppose ought of necessity to have been so separated by the prophets, lest they should have been looked upon as chimerical descriptions, and incompatible in one and the same subject.

A second reflexion which may be made upon this matter, is, That the *Jews* were bound not only to preserve their oracles, but also to execute them in part: thus, for instance, there was a necessity for them to reject the Messiah, to deliver him up to the *Gentiles* to be crucified; there was a necessity that their punishment should be as signal as their crime, and that they should be dispersed over the world, after the destruction of *Jerusalem*, as the prophets have clearly shewn. Now how could all this have ever been effected, if the description of the Messiah by the prophets had been as historical as that of the apostles, or the evangelists, who gave us only a narrative of matters of fact?

In a word, was it not the interest of the *Gentiles*, to whom the gospel was to be preached, that these oracles should be scattered up and down the writings of these ancient authors? They were to be called, upon the rejection of the *Jews*: the *Jews* were bound to preserve the books of the Old Testament, after they were cast off by God, that the authority of these books and these oracles might be beyond all contest, as testimonies with which we are furnished by the adverse party, which ought to have place, until the fulness of the *Gentiles* should profess Christianity. Let any one therefore judge if it was not necessary, in this state of affairs, that there should be some obscurity in the prophetical descriptions; and by consequence, that this interweaving of foreign ideas with those which concerned the Messiah, as also this dispersion of the oracles through different places of the sacred writers, was not necessary; and so much the more, as they were uttered upon several occasions by different authors.

And we may affirm it, as a certainty, that, according to the purpose of God, this obscurity did not hinder either *Jews* or *Pagans* from perceiving those *ruling* ideas of a Messiah, when they read the Old Testament. Neither was the dispersion of these oracles through so many different places any greater hindrance to their application; since the *Jews* laid it down as a constant maxim, that the accomplishment of every thing which we find to be foretold as great and illustrious by the prophets, ought to be looked for in the person of the Messiah, when the events of a nearer date did not answer to the greatness or magnificence of the predictions.

Several ages had passed, from the time in which the prophet had foretold that the Messiah was to be born at *Bethlehem*; and yet we see that the idea of it continued very fresh among the *Jews* in our Saviour Jesus Christ's time, as is plain from the answer which they gave to *Herod*.

There are several other examples might be given, which shew that the *Jews* in our Saviour's time applied the very same oracles to the Messiah which

which we do; and without question, if it had not been so, the apostles would first have proved that these oracles had relation to the Messiah, which they took for granted, as a thing constantly acknowledged; whereas now they only endeavoured in the gospel to justify that Jesus Christ was the Messiah, by shewing, one by one, that all the characters which the *Jews* attributed to the Messiah, were to be found in him.

Besides, it is manifest, from our Saviour's explication of the cxth *Psalms*, that though the *Jews* could not conceive the solution of that difficulty which naturally appears in those words, *The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand*, yet afterwards they immediately applied that oracle to the Messiah, without seeking after any other subjects to which they might apply it, as the *Jews* endeavour to do at this day.

But after these remarks upon the mixture of those oracles which relate to the Messiah, with others which seem to be of a more foreign nature, we ought to come to some general rules by which we are to apply the ancient oracles to the Messiah.

C H A P. VIII.

General Rules for the Understanding of ancient Oracles, and for the Application of them to the Messiah.

I. **A**S it appears very natural to conceive that the most ancient revelations ought to be expressed in the most general terms, because they were furthest from the time of their accomplishment, and so one ought to find in them a more perfect delineation of the design of God; yet it is visible, however, that they ought to contribute very much to the understanding of those later Oracles, because, if these later ones do really contain a more particular explication of his design in sending the Messiah into the world, yet they ought always to follow those ideas which God at first made use of to make his design known in the world.

II. It is natural to grant, that when God had told the *Jews*, by *Jacob* and *Balaam*, that the coming of the Messiah was not suddenly to happen, if he intended to bring them to a certain knowledge of the Messiah after a long revolution of years, by those ceremonial and judicial laws which he established, that he ought to breed them up in an expectation of the Messiah, by lively ideas, and by oracles which should particularly explain the manner and circumstances of his appearance.

III. It is no less natural to acknowledge, that when God promised some illustrious person, or some great advantage to the *Jewish* nation, he did it only to entertain the people with an expectation of the Messiah, and, upon that account, that he might and ought to join the promise of the Messiah with it, as the principal object which the *Jews* ought always to have in view, until it should actually happen.

In short, there are two sorts of oracles in the Old Testament: the first are such as it is impossible to apply to any other besides the Messiah; as, for instance, *the place of his birth; the seed of the woman shall break the serpent's head; the Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken* (1). Whereupon he that added the relation of *Moses's* death, takes notice that after that there arose up no Prophet in *Israel* like unto *Moses*.

The second are such as seem to agree in part to somebody else besides the Messiah, though we may find there also such particular characters, that it is impossible to apply them perfectly, and in their utmost extent, according to the whole force of their expression, to any other subject besides the Messiah. And so *Balaam* seems to have spoken of *David*, *Numb. xxiii.* as *Julian* the apostate maintains, and of his victories over the *Moabites*, in the same place where he promises the Messiah, and where he speaks of the manner of his subduing the children of *Seth*; and so *David*, in the second *Psalms*, speaks of the oppositions which he met with, in his advancement to the throne, but in terms too great and too emphatical to be applied to him alone.

Those principles which I have now established, that God promised the Messiah in general terms, but without any intention of sending him into the world until several ages had been passed, gave rise to these two sorts of oracles. On the one side, there was a necessity of explaining this promise distinctly from time to time; and, on the other side, there was a necessity of accommodating himself to the desires of the *Jews*, by joining these ideas with every thing that was great and considerable in those events, and in those persons to whom the prophetic spirit intended to add a lustre by its predictions.

The *Jews* are agreed at present, as they were also in our Saviour's time, in the application of the most part of those oracles in the Old Testament, which the Christians apply to the Messiah; and if they dispute some of them, which they explain in a sense perfectly forced, yet they cannot dispute these following truths.

I. That the most part of those oracles which we apply to the Messiah, were applied in the same manner by the *Jewish* Doctors in our Saviour's time: as the *CX. Psalm*, for instance, which has relation to the nature and glory of the Messiah; the *II. Psalm*, which has respect to the conspiracy of the princes and the people against the Messiah; that place in *Micah* which fixes the birth of the Messiah to *Bethlehem*, &c.

II. That, as they thought themselves obliged to make two Messiahs, because of the apparent contradictions which are to be found in those various events which are applied to the Messiah in those predictions; some perfectly glorious, and others every way contemptible; so there is no injustice done, in explaining those oracles which at first seem only to have relation to one single person, of the Messiah, and of some other person.

III. That since they themselves believe, that their ancestors might lawfully pass from one sense to another in their explications of those oracles, so that they were permitted to apply an oracle to some other subject, which did not seem to agree exactly enough to that subject which

their

(1) Gen. iii. 15. Deut. xviii. 15. Deut. xxxiv. 10.

their ancestors had first in view, as the particular subject concerning which the oracle treated; so it is not only just, but necessary too, to pass from one subject to another, as the Apostles have actually done.

IV. That we ought to pay a much greater deference to the opinion of the ancient *Jews*, than of those who have been sowed by their miseries and disputes to such a degree, that they have lost that principle of equity which keeps men from denying the most evident truths, and which have been the most universally acknowledged by a whole nation, that was not prepossessed with so great a degree of obstinacy.

But we ought to observe, besides, that this seeming confusion of those oracles which relate to the Messiah, with other subjects treated of by the Prophets, arose from several causes.

I. From the Prophets often joining the ideas of the principal promise, the sending of the Messiah, with the promise of those means which were absolutely necessary for the accomplishment of that promise, as the preservation of the *Jews*, for instance. So the captivity of the *Israelites* in *Egypt*, and their departure from thence, with their settling in the land of *Canaan*, which he had promised them before, were foretold, as necessary means, in the order of Providence, to the execution of the great design of God.

For so the *Babylonish* captivity, and their deliverance therefrom, which are both foretold, are foretold as steps towards the execution of the promise of sending the Messiah.

And so likewise, when they foretold the persecutions by *Antiochus*, and the other neighbouring nations, they also foretell the deliverance which God would grant to the *Jews*, and their re-establishment until the birth of the Messiah, which was the accomplishment of that great promise.

II. This seeming confusion arose from the writing of these books piece by piece, which afterwards were put in this order, without having always a regard to the time in which they were written, and without taking notice of all the occasions which engaged the Prophets to write. And thus we see the prophecies which relate to the Messiah joined to several other transactions, and to several other predictions, whose connexion is not always so very evident.

III. It arises from the writing of the prophecies each by themselves, so that all those of the same Prophet were put together as they came out, making only a new chapter in the work; whereas they ought to be considered rather with relation to the matter, than to the order in which they lie in the book, as we have it at the present: for the Prophets often borrow their light from what they themselves had said some time before, or from what some other Prophet had foretold, which ought to be observed particularly of those who lived about the same time.

But besides those rules which I proposed in the beginning of this chapter, and besides those observations of the joining the oracles which relate to the Messiah with other subjects, I must add two rules more, which may be useful in determining the sense of great numbers of oracles which are expressed in figurative terms. The first is, that it is natural to conceive, that when the Prophets were to speak of the Messiah, and when they were intent upon the description of his kingdom, they should make
use

use of expressions which seemed to foretel a sort of overturning of nature, which should happen at that time: but then these expressions ought to be understood in a figurative sense, in the same spiritual sense in which the Christians understood them, as the famous *Maimonides* allows in that passage of *Isaiah* where the *wolf* and the *lamb* are said to feed together (*m*).

Secondly, since the Messiah is described as one who should unite, in his own person, the glory of the Divinity and the meanness of the human nature together, we ought to understand those oracles in such a manner, that what is *great* in those prophetical descriptions, should not contradict the more contemptible part, when we consider the Messiah as clothed with all the meannesses of the human nature. These ideas, which are often joined in one and the same oracles, ought to be exactly applied to the different consideration which the Prophets had of the Messiah, or to those various states through which they themselves assure us the Messiah was to pass.

An intelligent reader will easily judge, that I might have added a third rule to the two former; which is, that when a person who has all the characters of a Prophet, applies an old oracle to any subject, one cannot reasonably dispute his application. This the Christians assure us was done by the Apostles in a very great number of oracles. But because this supposes a prophetic character in the apostles before it has been established by solid proofs, I shall wave the proposal of it at present.

After these general remarks, I shall gather together those oracles in the Old Testament, which relate to the Messiah. I might here follow the order of the matters, by bringing under each article those oracles which relate to it, which would give a great light to the subject, as *Eusebius* has rightly observed, and as he has practised himself in his books *de Demonstratione Evangelicâ*. However, I rather chose to follow the order of time in which these oracles were uttered, which did not seem improper to explain those truths which are contained in those oracles.

In short, this is of great importance: I. Because it is very natural to consider the series of God's design, and the connexion which may be found in those ideas which are made use of to express it.

II. Because of the necessity of the increase of light in the Revelations, proportionably as the time drew near; so that it is of use to observe how the Divine wisdom followed this natural order in making the later oracles clearer than the former, and in hinting, by little and little, a greater number of circumstances, by which it was necessary to explain them.

III. Because this serves to give us a very strong proof that God intended to furnish us, from the Scriptures themselves, with that which should fix us in a belief of this capital truth in our religion. In short, when the truth of each of the books in the Old Testament is once approved, and their age set down, it appears that several Prophets did agree wonderfully, without any concert, in the explication of the same truths, at several times, and in several places and circumstances, which hinder men, for the most part, from agreeing in the most common matters which are the subjects of their reflexions.

I have

I have already considered that the wisdom of God followed rules very conformable to the condition and inclinations of the Patriarchs, when it spoke of the Messiah. We may see the same conduct in the following times.

So, since God had promised children to *Adam* in *Abel's* stead, one may see that he also promised *David* a son who should sit upon his throne. He explains almost all the circumstances of his coming, his humiliation, his exaltation, the oppositions he should meet with, the victories he should obtain, and his offices, prophetic, priestly, and royal.

One sees afterwards, that the Prophets explain, in a more particular manner, all these ideas which *David* had already proposed. *Isaiab* speaks of his birth by a virgin, of his spiritual gifts, of his miracles, of his sufferings, of his resurrection, of his calling of all nations in to his worship, and of his casting off the *Jews*.

Those who come after, point out the place particularly, and the town, where the Messiah was to be born; they describe his covenant, and the calling of the Gentiles to the service of the God of *Israel*.

In short, they describe both the character of the fore-runner of the Messiah, and the empire under which he was to appear, and the very year in which he was to die, as *Daniel* particularly doth.

I cannot undertake to relate all the oracles which are contained in the books of the Old Testament, they are so very numerous: but I hope at least, to mark the more principal, and the most illustrious ones, and to explain them in such a manner, that all shall be obliged to acknowledge, I. That God designed to give infallible proofs to his church, of his design in sending the Messiah into the world, and to preserve the continual remembrance of him, as of a person who was promised to give all comfort to his church, and whose coming should bring salvation to all mankind; II. That the care which he took in specifying all the circumstances of his coming into the world, shews that he designed to prevent the scandal which the abject life and death of a Messiah might produce, and the false judgments which men might form of the works of a Divine wisdom, when they only judge of them by the outside; III. That he designed to give an infallible proof, that this sending of the Messiah was the work of his wisdom and fidelity, which at last accomplished a thing, the design whereof had been proposed to mankind immediately after the fall.

C H A P. IX.

Of those Oracles concerning the Messiah which are to be found in the Book of GENESIS.

I BEGIN with those Oracles which are contained in the book of *Genesis*, since it is convenient to touch them all over again in few words.

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The first oracle is comprised in these terms, *Gen. iii. 15. I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.*

This oracle has considerable advantages, though it is expressed in figurative terms. God uttered it in the beginning of the world, after he had given sentence against *Adam*, and the woman, and the serpent, in a very sensible manner, even under a human shape, if we may dare to affirm it. He uttered it before the head of all mankind, which ought to make it considerable to all his posterity. He expresses it by an allusion to the nature of the temptation, and to the form of the serpent, which the tempter had took upon him. He preserves thereby the memory of the temptation, by inspiring all mankind with an invincible hatred against all serpents in general, though the tempter had took the shape but of one particular kind, for an instrument to accomplish his design.

In short, this oracle clearly shews, I. That it should be particularly the seed of the woman; *Adam* not being touched at. II. That the seed of the woman, that is to say, the Messiah, should destroy the power of the serpent, expressed by the head, that is to say, the power of the Devil. III. That this seed should, however, receive a considerable wound from the Devil, though it should only touch his heel, the least considerable part of the Messiah. IV. That all the blessings which God should give to mankind after the fall, should be grounded upon the sending of this seed into the world: this is more clearly expressed by God's telling *Abraham*, *That in thy seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed* (n).

That this oracle, *Gen. iii.* has relation to the Messiah, is plain: I. Because it is the source and abridgment of the whole revelation; II. Because all the ancient *Jews* in effect understood it so; III. Because the Apostles, in following the ideas of the synagogues, plainly referred them to the Messiah, by the allusions which they make to them (o), *John xii. Romans xvi. II. Cor. xi. I. John iii.*

The second oracle which relates to the Messiah, is contained in these terms, when God spoke to *Abraham*; *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.*

This oracle is very illustrious: I. By the person of *Abraham*, whom God made the depositary of it, and who made himself ready to sacrifice his own son: II. By the frequent repetitions which God made to this Patriarch, using in effect all those ways which he afterwards followed in his revelations to the Patriarchs, for fifty years together, from the year 2083 to the year 2133 of the world: III. Because it was accompanied by the circumcision; so that, though it foretold that the advantages should be in common to all nations, yet it limited the Messiah to be born of *Abraham's* seed.

It also intimates very clearly, I. That the blessings which it promises should be in common to all nations; II. That this blessing should be quite of another nature from temporal ones, as the increase, for instance, and the power of *Abraham's* posterity, which had been promised to him before. St. Paul's reflexions, *Gal. iii. 8.* That God spake of seed in the singular number, is very remarkable; and so much the more, because the *Jews* made a like observation upon a parallel place in the Old Testament.

(n) *Gen. xxii. 18.*

(o) *Targum in b. l.*

As God repeated this promise when he spoke to *Isaac* in the year 2200, and to *Jacob* in the year 2245, *Gen. xxviii. 14. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed*, so one ought to repeat again the same reflexions. This ought only to be added, That God restrained the honour of bringing forth the Messiah to *Jacob*, the son of *Isaac*, that the *Edomites* might not come in to challenge the right, as I have very particularly explained in my reflexions upon *Genesis*.

We come now to the oracle which *Jacob* gave in the year 2315. It is one of the clearest predictions in the whole Bible, and it is expressed in these terms: *Judah, thou art he whom thy brethren shall praise; thy hand shall be in the neck of thine enemies: thy father's children shall bow down before thee. Judah is a lion's whelp; from the prey, my son, thou art gone up: he stooped down, he couched as a lion, and as an old lion: who shall rouse him up? The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be. Binding his foal unto the vine, and his ass's colt unto the choice vine; he washed his garments in wine, and his clothes in the blood of grapes. His eyes shall be red with wine, and his teeth white with milk. Gen. xlix. 8.—12.* I know very well, that some of the *Jews* have pretended that *Moses* ought to be understood for *Shiloh*; but this is so ridiculous an opinion, that there is not the least probability to maintain it. What sceptre had *Judah*, before *Moses* came? How was *Moses* the expectation of the *Gentiles*, and the object of their hope?

And, indeed, the body of the *Jewish* nation are agreed, that this oracle was meant of the Messiah; so *Onkelos* the *Chaldee* paraphrast, so the *Jerusalem Targum*, and *Jonathan's*, so *R. Solomon Jarchi*, *Abenezra*, and *Kimchi*, are agreed.

Now these reflexions may be naturally drawn from this oracle, which *Jacob* uttered upon his death-bed.

I. This oracle is found amongst a great number of oracles which concern the other tribes of the *Israelites*, and which were accomplished as to every tribe.

II. This oracle contains several particular events which relate to private transactions in the tribe of *Judah*.

III. This oracle was, as it were, *Jacob's* will in favour of *Judah*, at a time when he divided amongst his children their portions which they were to expect from him.

IV. This was a preference of *Judah*, who was but the fourth, to *Reuben* who was the eldest, and who, by consequence, ought to have been the head of his family. The sceptre, and the authority of legislator, was promised to *Judah*, which did not belong to him by the right of his birth.

Jacob therefore prepared his children to look for an accomplishment of those promises made to *Abraham* in *Judah*, as well for the kings who were to be descended from him, as for the nations of the earth who were to be blessed in *Abraham's* seed.

But we must go yet further. I shall therefore observe, I. That this prophecy particularly regarded the tribe of *Judah*, as all the preceding and

and following oracles concerned those tribes whose heads were then named by *Jacob*.

II. That this prophecy concerns the tribe of *Judah*, as settled in the land of *Canaan*, by a distinct establishment from the other tribes. In short, it is certain that the tribe of *Judah* had some superiority. Thus God, for instance, commanded that tribe to march the first, *Numb. ii. & x.* Its heads offered their presents first, *Numb. vii. 11, 12, 13.* In *Joshua's* time this tribe took its division, without drawing lots for it. One sees that God ordered the tribe of *Judah* to lead the people out to the conquest of the rest of the country; one sees the same prerogatives in the book of *Judges*, though they were often of other tribes. From *David's* time to the taking of *Jerusalem* by *Nebuchadnezzar*, the kings were all of that tribe; and *Zorobabel* afterwards headed those who returned out of *Babylon*. The book of the *Chronicles* names the tribe of *Judah* first; *Herod* was the first king who was wholly a stranger.

III. That *Jacob* supposed that the tribe of *Judah* should be in possession of a form of government, and of a community, till the coming of the Messiah. This was all very proper; and indeed we see that this tribe continued under its own governors, after the other tribes had been transported, *II. Kings xviii. 18.* It almost swallowed up *Benjamin* and *Levi*, who settled in their country; and indeed *Josephus* assures us, that there were but few of the ten tribes who came back again into *Judaea* under *Ezra*; for the greatest part of them stayed beyond *Euphrates*; and we see that at last they gave their name to the whole country.

IV. That this oracle was fulfilled by degrees. This I have observed already of the pre-eminency of the tribe of *Judah* before *David's* time, which was a step to the advancement of it to the throne; and the lessening of their dignity, which was to be entirely taken away when the Messiah came, had also the same gradations. *David* was set upon the throne over all *Israel*; but his house lost the government over ten tribes in his grandson *Rehoboam's* time. His successors were tributary to the neighbouring princes: whereas *David* carried his empire to the walls of *Babylon*; though afterwards the *Babylonians* subdued the *Jews*, and deposed the kings of *Judah*. At last, they absolutely lost all that authority which they had hitherto kept. They recovered a little in the person of *Zorobabel*; and though they were soon after invaded by the *Selucidæ*, yet the *Maccabæus* preserved them a little, till *Herod* and the *Romans* took away all those remnants which they had yet left.

In carrying these views of this oracle further, we may yet further observe, I. That God intended to oblige the *Israelites* to wait for the sceptre in the tribe of *Judah*. It must be there, before it could depart thence. It was natural to conceive, that the *Jews* were to look yet much further than *David*. Those words, *It shall not depart*, denote a continuance of the sceptre in the house of *David* for some considerable time.

II. It is easy to comprehend a lessening of the dignity in the term *lowgion*, [See *Judges v. 14.* מַגִּיד] which God seems to have made use of, as a mark of the fall, which I have observed in the person of *Zorobabel*, who, as to the time, was about the middle of the oracle.

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III. In a word, it is easy to acknowledge that this oracle assigns the *epocha* in gross for the time of the coming of the Messiah; viz. the ruin of that authority and power which the *Jews* (properly so called from the tribe of *Judah*) should enjoy after their re-establishment. God could not explain himself more particularly, in stating the precise time when this thing should happen.

There are two other very considerable oracles; one uttered by *Balaam*, in the year 2553, before the king of the *Moabites*, who had sent for him to curse the people of *Israel* that lay in the plains; the other uttered the same year, by *Moses*, the famous legislator of the *Jews*. The first is inferred, by *Moses*, in the xxivth chapter of *Numbers*; the other is in the xviiith of *Deuteronomy*.

The first is in these words: *I shall see him, but not now; I shall behold him, but not nigh: there shall come a star out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel, and shall smite all the corners of Moab, and destroy all the children of Seth. And Edom shall be a possession, Seir also shall be a possession for his enemies, and Israel shall do valiantly. Out of Jacob shall come he that shall have dominion, and shall destroy him that remaineth of the city.*

One ought to observe, that *Balaam's* character, the presence of the king and the elders of *Moab*, and all the circumstances in which it was uttered, do advance its authority considerably.

But the turn of his expressions is equally singular and remarkable. I. He speaks of the Messiah as of a star, hinting out to us the celestial nature of the Messiah: whereas hitherto God had only described him under the figure of a bare man: though the other was made sufficiently intelligible, when the destruction of the empire of the temple, and the right of procuring a blessing unto all the nations of the earth, which he was personally to enjoy, were attributed to him; things infinitely beyond the power and condition of mankind to perform, were attributed to him. II. He observes, that this person of whom he speaks such magnificent things, ought however to be descended from *Jacob*; which raises *Jacob's* prophecy in favour of *Judah*. III. Though he hints very clearly at the effects of those blessings and temporal victories which *Jacob's* posterity was to obtain over their neighbours, yet at the same time he insinuates plainly enough, that the bestowing of the blessing which all the nations of the world should obtain, was to be reserved to *Jacob's* seed; when he refused to retract those promises of blessing which God had made to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, and *Jacob*, to which oracles he made a sensible allusion.

And it is very important to consider, that the *Jews* always applied this oracle to the Messiah, as may be seen by their *Chaldee* paraphrast; and it was acknowledged so generally, that the famous *Achiba*, who lived under the emperor *Hadrian*, pretended that *Barchochba* was the Messiah, because his name was *Chochab*, which is a star in *Hebrew*; as if God intended to mark that impostor for the true Messiah, by foretelling what name he should be called by.

The oracle which *Moses* uttered a little before his death, is very considerable. The people being terrified with the manner of God's speaking to them upon Mount *Sinai*, desired that God would no longer speak as he had done before, but that *Moses* should give them an account of what

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ever God should command. Hereupon, God consents to their request, and promised them, by *Moses*, that he would raise them up a prophet like unto *Moses*, to whom they ought to hearken, upon pain of being cut off.

He that made the addition to the last book of *Moses*, wherein his death is described, takes notice that there never rose up afterwards a Prophet in *Israel* like to *Moses*. If it was *Ezra* who made that addition, then here is a plain and clear decision against the *Jews*, some of whom assert, that *Joshua* or *Jeremiah* was the prophet whom *Moses* promised: if it was *Eliazar*, who lived in *Joshua's* time, then here *Joshua* at least is excluded from this privilege of being designed by *Moses*.

But it is to no purpose to stop at such frivolous objections: one needs only observe *Moses's* character, to take notice of four certain marks of *Moses's* prophecies, which advance him infinitely above all the other Prophets. I. He had all the sorts of revelations which are generally found amongst all the Prophets. II. He was illustrious for great numbers of miracles. III. He not only reformed the errors and false ways of worship then prevailing amongst the *Jews*, but he set up a new worship, and a new form of religion. IV. He introduced this law, and this way of worshipping God, by such a conversation with God, as one sees amongst two intimate friends. In which of the Prophets may these four characters be found?

The *Galileans* themselves testified plainly that these characters ought only to be found in the person of the Messiah, when they saw the miracles of Jesus Christ, *John* vi. 14; and the *Jews* acknowledged the same in our Saviour's time, when they applied that oracle to the Messiah, *John* i. 45.

But if these oracles were obscurely hinted at in this oracle, one may see them clearly applied to the Messiah in the following oracles, proportionably as the revelation increased, and as God unravelled the ideas of these ancient oracles, by explaining them more particularly by those Prophets whom he afterwards raised up. This may clearly be seen, if we pass on to those oracles which were uttered by *David*, and the other Prophets who lived about his time.

C H A P. X.

Of the Oracles which concern the Messiah in the Book of PSALMS;

THESE were the Oracles which were the subjects of the meditations of the faithful from the year of the world 2553, in which *Moses* died, until *David's* time, who was particularly chosen by God to be the only man of his family, which was also separated from all the other families of *Judah*, who came from *Pharez*, from whom the Messiah was to be descended.

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I have observed, in another place, that in all probability God raised *David* to the throne, only to make the genealogy of that family better known, from which the *Messiah* was to spring.

As this double advancement of *David*, one to the throne of *Israel*, the other to be the father to the *Messiah*, ought to have inspired him with lively resentments of gratitude, and as his oracles would be much more famous, being uttered by a royal Prophet, and the rather because God employed him in the making a just regulation of the service of the sanctuary; so we see that *David* employed his pen in giving more distinct ideas of that *Messiah* which he promised them.

The name *Messiah* properly signifies a person consecrated by anointing to be King, Priest, or Prophet. This name was particularly applied by *David*, and the Prophets who lived after him, to that holy seed which God had promised to *Abraham's* family by *Isaac*, by *Jacob*, by *Judah*, and by *David*; and one may observe in *David's Psalms*, and in the Prophets of his time, that they gave the name of *Messiah* to the promised seed, under one or other of these three senses.

The characters both of a Prophet and a Priest, though each of them are august enough, yet yield to that of a King. These are the different ideas which *David*, and the Prophets of that time, followed in all the variety of their descriptions.

But it is not my design to give a particular account of all those oracles which describe these different characters, for fear of being excessively long: so I shall content myself with observing two things: I. That *David* alone uttered more oracles than all the Prophets who came before him; II. That these oracles of *David*, concerning the *Messiah*, are clearer than all the precedent ones.

Now, I say, that *David* alone uttered more oracles than any one Prophet who came before him; thus in the xlth *Psalms* he explains the decree by which the *Messiah* became the servant of God, and clothed himself with the form of a servant, to offer unto God a more perfect obedience than that which had formerly been offered by burnt-offerings and sacrifices. He describes the measure and the nature of his ministry, which was to consist in the instruction of the people in righteousness, truth, and the salvation of God. *Psalms* xl. 7.—11. *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required. Then, said I, Lo, I come; in the volume of the book it is written of me. I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea, thy law is within my heart. I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest. I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart, I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation: I have not concealed thy loving kindness, and thy truth, from the great congregation.*

In the xvth *Psalms* he describes the inviolable steadfastness of the *Messiah* to the service of God, who had sent him to form a great people; with the manner of his deliverance by God from all the powers of the world, by raising him up from the dead, and afterwards receiving him into glory. *Psalms* xvi. 8, &c. *I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt*

not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

In the xxvth Psalm he describes the agonies through which the Messiah was to pass, the manner of his death, the victory which he should obtain over his enemies, and the conversion of those very nations which had cast him off.

In the cixth Psalm he speaks of the oppressions of the Messiah, pronouncing great numbers of imprecations against that very person who should signalize himself by persecuting his innocence. *Hold not thy peace, O God of my praise: for the mouth of the wicked, and the mouth of the deceitful, are opened against me; they have spoken against me with a lying tongue. Verse 1, 2. Set thou a wicked man over him; and let Satan stand at his right hand. When he shall be judged, let him be condemned, and let his prayer become sin. Let his days be few, and let another take his office. Verse 6, 7, 8. Because that he remembered not to shew mercy, but persecuted the poor and needy man, that he might even slay the broken in heart. As he loved cursing, so let it come to him: as he delighted not in blessing, so let it be far from him. As he clothed himself with cursing like as with his garment, so let it come into his bowels like water, and like oil into his bones. Verse 16, 17, 18.*

In the lxxixth Psalm he carries this argument further, in his description of the zeal of the Messiah for the house of God, and of those insultings which he should meet with, and the manner of their giving him vinegar and gall to drink, with the hardening and rejection of those who had used him in that manner. *Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. Verse 1, 2. Let not them that wait on thee, O Lord God of Hosts, be ashamed for my sake: let not those that seek thee, be confounded for my sake, O God of Israel. Because for thy sake I have born reproach; shame hath covered my face. I am become a stranger unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother's children: for the zeal of thy house hath eaten me up; and the reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me. Verse 6, 7, 8, 9. Reproach hath broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness: and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none. They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink. Let their table become a snare before them; and that which should have been for their welfare, let it become a trap. Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thy indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Verse 20, 21, 22, 23, 24.*

In the xcviith and xcviith Psalms, he describes the destruction of idolatry when the promised Saviour should appear, and when God should raise him upon his throne. *The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof. Psalm xcvi. 1. Confounded be all they that serve graven images, that boast themselves of idols: worship him, all ye gods. Zion heard, and was glad, and the daughters of Judah rejoiced; because of thy judgments, O Lord: for thou, Lord, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods. Verse 7, 8, 9. O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand, and his holy arm, have gotten him the victory. The Lord hath made known his sal-*

vation:

vation: his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of the heathen. He hath remembered his mercy and his truth towards the house of Israel: all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all the earth: make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise. Psalm xcvi. 1—4.

In the lxxviiith Psalm he explains the glory of the Messiah, and his ascension into heaven, with the effusion of those gifts which he was to spread abroad for the conversion of the nations, that God might dwell amongst the most rebellious. Princes shall come out of Egypt, Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God. Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth: O sing praises unto the Lord. To him who rideth upon the heavens of heavens, which were of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, and that a mighty voice. Ascribe ye strength unto God: his excellency is over Israel, and his strength is in the clouds. O God, thou art terrible out of thy holy places, the God of Israel is he that giveth strength and power unto his people. Verse 31, 32, 33, 34, 35.

The Prophets who lived in the time of David, or soon after, pursued all his ideas. One sees that Nathan, II. Sam. vii. foretells Solomon's glory, and the honour which he should have in building that temple of which David had formed the design before, in such a manner, that he clearly shews three things which will by no means agree with Solomon. I. That God should raise up a son to David after his death, and place him upon his throne; whereas Solomon was born, and advanced to the throne by David himself. II. It was promised that this government should be endless: this is not applicable to the royal posterity of David, who had but twenty successors, who bore the title of kings. III. That God particularly promises to be the father of this promised son, which is not more applicable to Solomon than to David, to Josiah, or Hezekiah.

One sees that Corah's posterity gave that account of Solomon's glory upon his marriage with the king of Egypt's daughter; he speaks of a throne much more august than that prince's was, and he represents to us a God consecrated with oil of gladness above his fellows. This exactly sets forth the august character of the Messiah, and his anointing to be the king of all nations, their Prophet, and their Priest. Psalm xlv. 1. My heart is inditing a good matter: I speak of the things which I have made touching the king: my tongue is the pen of a ready writer. Verse 7, 8. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with oil of gladness above thy fellows. Verse 16. Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children, whom thou mayst make princes in all the earth.

One sees the same Prophets inviting all nations, in the xlviiith Psalm, to acknowledge the kingdom of God; which Daniel afterwards describes as that which the Jews already knew was to be governed by the Messiah.

One sees Asaph describing in the fiftieth Psalm the manner of the Messiah's assembling all people, and of his rejecting the ancient and legal service, and prescribing a spiritual one, even sacrifices of vows, and of praise. Verse 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. And the heavens shall declare his righteousness: for God is judge himself. Hear, O my people, and I will speak; O Israel, and I will

testify against thee: I am God, even thy God. I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices, or thy burnt-offerings, to have been continually before me. I will take no bullock out of thy house, nor he-goat out of thy folds. For every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.

One sees the author of the lxxiid Psalm describing the glory and happiness of Solomon's kingdom in such a manner, that he carries his views as high as the Messiah at the same time; he foretels the continuance of his kingdom as long as the sun and moon endures; that all the kings of the world should bring presents to him, and that all the nations of the earth should worship before him. Verse 5. *They shall fear thee as long as the sun and moon endure, throughout all generations.* Verse 8. *He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.* Verse 11. *All kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him.* Verse 17, 18, 19. *His name shall endure for ever; his name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him; all nations shall call him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things; and blessed be his glorious name for ever, and let the whole earth be filled with all his glory; Amen and Amen.*

One sees that Ethan the Ezrahite, who is represented to us as the wisest man in that age after Solomon, explains the promise made to David of a son who should reign for ever, and whose throne should be immovable, in the lxxxixth Psalm. This agrees to none but the Messiah, whom he describes as the first-born of the princes of the earth, and as the son of God, in a manner which is not applicable to any of David's posterity, except only to the Messiah. Verse 19, 20. *Then thou spakest in visions to the Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people. I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him.* Verse 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29. *My faithfulness and my mercy shall be with him; and in my name shall his horn be exalted. I will set his hand also in the sea, and his right hand in the rivers. He shall cry unto me, Thou art my Father, my God, and the Rock of my Salvation. Also I will make him my first-born, higher than the kings of the earth. My mercy will I keep for him for evermore, and my covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.* Verse 33, 34, 35, 36, 37. *Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Once have I sworn by my holiness, that I will not lie unto David. His seed shall endure for ever, and his throne as the sun before me: it shall be established for ever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven.*

One needs only read over the Psalms which I have now taken notice of, and which are almost all applied by the Jews to the Messiah, to see the great number of oracles which God gave in David's time, concerning this matter; not to speak of those which describe the calling of the Gentiles, which fill up the book of the Psalms almost entirely.

I come now to the proof of the second article, which is to shew, that the oracles which David uttered are much clearer, and much more particular, than those which were given before. This I hope to prove, beyond all consideration, by considering two Psalms, the one whereof describes the prodigious humiliation of the Messiah, and the other describes his

his advancement at the right hand of God; two of the greatest truths declared by the Prophets, and two the most singular of all the characters which belong to the *promised Messiah*.

C H A P. XI.

Considerations upon the Sufferings of the MESSIAH, and upon his glorious Ascension into Heaven, foretold by DAVID in the xxiid and cxth PSALMS.

IT cannot be denied, when one reads the xxiid *Psalms*, but that the person there spoken of is described figuratively, as one exposed to the severest sufferings, from which he is afterwards delivered by the Divine assistance, and advanced to rule an empire which extends itself over all the nations of the world, and afterwards universally adored.

I. He that speaks, cries out as if God had forsaken him, and had stopped his ears unto his cry.

II. He describes himself as a worm, and no man, as the reproach of men, and one despised by the people.

III. He takes notice, that those who were witnesses of his sufferings, made a mock at them, bidding him trust in God, that he might deliver him.

IV. He ranks his enemies amongst the bulls of *Bashan*, and raging lions, who (according to the prophetic way of speaking) are the chief men in the nation. *Amos iv. 1. Ezek. xxii. 25.*

V. He joins the dogs with them, that is, profane persons, or the *Gentiles*.

VI. He represents his hands and his feet as pierced with nails.

VII. He shews that he was stretched out before, in such a manner, that they might count all his bones: this expresses the idea of a man fastened to a cross, and exposed to the view of all the world; as he afterwards describes himself to be quite dried up, from the loss of blood, when he was crucified.

VIII. He takes notice of their parting his garments, and,

IX. Of their casting lots upon his vesture.

In short, one sees, throughout all the expressions of this *Psalms*, the image of a death which was equally shameful and cruel.

The other part of the *Psalms* gives us an account of the deliverance of that person who is mentioned in this holy hymn.

I. He obliges himself to praise the name of the Lord in the most numerous assembly.

II. He observes it as an effect of this deliverance, that all the ends of the world should remember, and turn unto the Lord, and that all the kindreds of the nations should worship before him.

III. At last, he takes notice that the kingdom of God should spread itself over all the nations of the world.

One may judge, by the history of *David*, whether this *Psalms* is applicable to him; therein we may see all the crosses which he underwent, particularly represented, during all the former years of his reign. But there we have no account that *David* ever suffered any thing like that which is so exactly described in this *Psalms*. And this may be said further, that when *David* took any occasion to paint out his sufferings to us, he has put in several strokes which only relate to the Messiah, and which shew us, in a very lively manner, that he was to pass through much greater trials than any of those from which *David* had been delivered.

The later *Jews*, who endeavour to verify this prophecy in *Esther* or *Mordecai*, agree with us at the bottom, that *David* carried his views further than barely in his own sufferings; and those also who apply it to the people of *Israel*, must acknowledge the same truth, even against their wills.

But the more ancient *Jews* were more equitable in their applications of the *xxi*d *Psalms* to the Messiah. They applied it to him in earnest, even after the time of Jesus Christ, when the comparison of these characters of the Messiah, which may be found so exactly in the death of Jesus Christ, led them to an opposition of this truth.

And certainly there needs very little equity to acknowledge that this oracle, or rather this heap of oracles, belonged to the Messiah, by the confession and agreement of the *Jews* in our Saviour's time.

I. They had not then resolved to make their advantages of the writer's fault, who writ [כָּאֵר] like a lion, instead of [כָּאֵר] they have pierced my feet, as they have done since. In short, *Aquila*, who lived a hundred years after Jesus Christ, and the other *Jewish* interpreters, *Symmachus* and *Theodotion*, translated that passage as we now read it.

II. The notion which the Synagogue always had of the sufferings of the Messiah, obliged them to suppose two Messiahs, one suffering, and the other glorious, rather than to contradict that truth openly, which is expressed by these oracles in so particular a manner.

III. Nothing can be imagined to be more ridiculous, than to suppose that Jesus Christ should quote the first words of this *Psalms* upon the cross, thereby to engage all mankind to take notice of the accomplishment of this ancient oracle in all his sufferings, if we suppose that this *Psalms*, even by the confession of the *Jews*, had no relation to the Messiah.

The same reflexion may be made concerning the apostles, who have quoted so many passages of this *Psalms*, to prove that Jesus Christ was the Messiah; because one may find in his death, and in the circumstances of it, such a literal and exact accomplishment of this ancient prophecy.

But if it should be objected, that, after all, this agreement of the Synagogue can make no more than a strong prejudice, this may be easily answered, by considering that when the *Psalms* speaks of the extent of his kingdom over the whole earth, it was that circumstance which determined the Synagogue in their application of this whole *Psalms* to the Messiah; because, as the *Jews* themselves acknowledge, this extent of empire

empire is one of those characters which, according to the ancient oracles, is applicable to none but the Messiah. In short, (because it is of great importance, I shall repeat it here again) common sense led those who considered these ancient oracles, to compare them (as naturally they ought) with those that went before, and to determine the scope and intent of the later ones by the relation which they had to the precedent ones; and there was only need of one considerable clause, to make a certain determination after they had made such a comparison. This the Jews were certainly convinced of, when they acknowledged that the last words of *David*, II. *Sam.* xxiii. 1—8. were to be applied to the Messiah, by comparing them with *Balaam's* oracle of the Messiah, *Numb.* xxiv.

We may therefore take it for granted, that *David* did not absolutely speak of himself in the xxiid *Psalms*, and that he carried his views as far as the Messiah; that he gave a great number of characters to his posterity, whereby they might distinguish, notwithstanding the greatness of his sufferings, and even the better by his very sufferings, than which no clearer marks can possibly be given; because there is nothing more involuntary than enduring of miseries, nor nothing which depends less upon the choice of the person who is to undergo them, than the particular kind of punishment, or than the circumstances which must accompany his death, when it is once left to the unjust power of violent enemies.

We come now to the cxth *Psalms*, which in a very few words contains several very important characters of the Messiah, which are very distinctly expressed.

If one considers it exactly, it seems to have been composed after that *Nathan* had acquainted *David* with the glory of his son, which God had promised him; such a son who should build a house wherein God should dwell for ever, and who should sit upon a throne which should never be overturned; whereas *David* had only formed a design of building a temple to the Lord.

In short, one sees that the spirit of prophecy had given him a view of the glory of this august king who should be born of his seed, and of the glory of his kingdom which should never be destroyed. *David* advances this king not only above all MEN, by calling him *his Lord*, who was himself a king; but also above the angels, by making him sit at the right hand of God in the kingdom of heaven. This is personal. He also describes the glory of his office, by considering him as a priest of a higher order than that of *Aaron*, from whom *Melchisedech* received tithes in the person of *Abraham*: and, in a word, he acquaints us with the progress of his kingdom, and the greatness of his victories. Let us examine all these characters of themselves.

I. He brings in God speaking to the Messiah, whom he calls *his Lord*: *Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thy enemies thy footstool*. This points out to us, 1. That the Messiah ought to be advanced to glory; 2. That God intended to subdue his enemies by little and little, whilst the Messiah should be in his glory, as it was foretold in the second *Psalms*.

II. He observes, That the empire of the Messiah was to begin at *Jerusalem*, or *Sion*, which was then to be under the power of his enemies.

III. He expressly points out the quick extent of the kingdom of the Messiah, with the character of those who should submit to him without constraint or violence, which was much practised under *Moses's* law.

IV. He positively asserts, that the Messiah should be established a Priest after the order of *Melchisedech*, which would overturn the whole Levitical priesthood, which then was to have an end; yet the very same king who designed the draught of the temple which *Solomon* built some time after, undermines the foundations of this material building, and clearly supposes that the Levitical ministry, which was fixed to *Solomon's* temple, should last no longer than until the coming of the Messiah.

V. He particularly takes notice, that the Messiah should, by the Divine assistance, destroy all that should oppose his power, and should bring all things under his dominion, as a conqueror who should overturn all things with the utmost violence.

Nothing can be greater than these several oracles; nothing can be more particular than his description of the glory to which the Messiah was to be advanced after that prodigious humiliation which is described in the *xxiij Psalm*; but what can we suppose to be the reason of *David's* speaking of the Messiah in this *Psalm*? This I am further to consider.

One may say that the *Jews* did not constantly apply these prophecies to the Messiah, before the coming of *Jesus Christ*, without good grounds: they could not apply them to any of *David's* successors; none of *David's* successors was both king and priest. *Uzziah* was the only man who dared to usurp the priesthood; and he was punished by God himself. The *Maccabees* were not of *David's* tribe, but were *Levites*; and none of them ever went up into heaven, to sit at the right hand of God. Besides, their kingdom did not begin in *Sion*, and they never brought any other kings under their authority. They applied it therefore to the Messiah, pursuant to the maxim which they drew from a frequent meditation upon the ancient oracles, that we ought only to look for an accomplishment of those prophecies in the person of the Messiah, which they never could find to be fulfilled any where else; when, at the same time, they knew that the exactness and truth of those predictions could not be any ways contested.

In short, it plainly appears that they did unanimously apply it to the Messiah before *Jesus Christ* came into the world, from the manner of their confessing it to our Saviour, when he pressed them with the *xth Psalm*; though they could not explain the manner how *David* should call the Messiah Lord, when they allowed him to be his son, *Matth. xxii. 48.*

One sees nothing so frequently urged by the Apostles as this *cxth Psalm*; they use it upon all occasions, to prove that *Jesus Christ* had the characters of the true Messiah, such as *David* had given him in the *cxth Psalm*, supposing still, as a thing beyond dispute, that *David* spoke of the Messiah in this famous prophecy.

So that, what evasions soever the *Jews* may endeavour to make use of, yet they cannot deny but that their most famous Doctors, since *Jesus Christ*, have upon several occasions followed the old notions of the Synagogue in this matter. One finds in their writings great numbers of testimonies

testimonies which confirm this truth. I shall not mention them at present, because they are well enough known, and because I would make haste to come to that new degree of revelations which God gave to those Prophets who gave new characters of the Messiah to the Jewish nation for some ages after *David's* time.

They are in too great a number to be spoken of, one by one, and I am forced to range them under certain heads; though I intend at the same time to make more particular reflexions upon some of those which give us an account of the most remarkable truths, and so by that means furnish us with the most sensible character whereby we may know more certainly the person whom God proposed to his people in such a manner as the Saviour of *Israel*, and whom he had before called the *Expectation of the Gentiles*.

C H A P. XII.

That the MESSIAH was to have a Forerunner, and what was to be his Character.

WE shall make it manifest, in the sequel of the discourse, that the Messiah was to appear in a very despicable state, and consequently that his appearance would be very distasteful to those who expected him in the splendour of a great king and conqueror. To oppose this preconceived opinion of theirs, the Divine Wisdom thought fit to appoint one to be his forerunner, who should call the *Jews* to repentance, and a reformation of their lives, and form in them a true notion of the ministry of the Messiah, as of a person who was to prescribe to them laws of the greatest purity and holiness. And indeed, in examining the holy Scriptures, we find that the appearance of the Messiah was to be ushered in by a person thus distinguished: the following prophecies are very exprefs to this purpose.

The first of these we find in the xlth of *Isaiah*, verse 3, where the Prophet speaks thus, before the destruction of the first temple; *The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God* (a). The *Jews* acknowledge that this chapter speaks of the comfort the Messiah was to procure for his people, and that the voice mentioned here refers to those who were to declare and proclaim his coming (b).

We meet with a second prophecy in *Malachi*, who prophesied after the rebuilding of the temple, and who, having shut up the vision, precisely points at the time wherein he was to appear, viz. during the second temple, chap. iii; verse 1, 2, 3, and 4. *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight*

(a) *Isai.* xl. 3.

(b) *Aben Ezra.*

delight in, behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand, when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers soap. And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

The Jews own that these words also of *Malachi* speak of the forerunner of the Messiah (c).

But we ought to observe in the foregoing passages, I. That they have a manifest relation to the time of the Messiah's coming. Should the Jews deny this (as indeed they unanimously acknowledge it) it would be an easy matter to convince them, 1. By urging the authority of the Evangelists, who apply these very passages to the ministry of *John the Baptist*. Thus we find that St. *Matthew* and St. *Mark* make a manifest allusion to these two prophecies (d): *Zachary* also, the father of *John the Baptist*, applies that of *Isaiah* to his son; and his authority is the more considerable, because he was a priest. 2. By an attentive considering the passages themselves. 3. By the common consent of the Jewish church, who by a generally received and undoubted tradition, that *Elijah* the *Tisbbit* (the *Septuagint*, in their translation of that place of *Malachi*, telling us as much) was to be the forerunner of the Messiah; and we find that, in the time of our Saviour, the multitude and his Disciples supposed the same thing: and the Jews at this day have the same persuasion, viz. that *Elias* is to come before the appearance of the Messiah; from which tradition of the Jews the Christians of old did, and many at this day do believe, that *Elias* shall resume the functions of his ministry before the last coming of Jesus Christ to judge the quick and the dead.

II. We may observe, that the character of the forerunner of the Messiah being that which the Jews had much in their eye, it was needful for it to be as notable and extraordinary as was that of the Prophet *Elias*, whose ministry was without dispute the most remarkable and illustrious of all the Prophets since *Moses*; which gave the the Prophet *Malachi* occasion to call him *Elias*, much upon a like account as the Prophet *Ezekiel* calls the Messiah, *David* (e).

But above all things, we must carefully observe the several marks the Prophets give us of this forerunner.

The Prophet *Isaiah* gives us these following particulars: 1. That his ministry was to be very signal, and attended with general respect and veneration; 2. That he was to preach in the wilderness; 3. That he was to call sinners to repentance; 4. That he was to confound those who were most eminent in authority, and to comfort the poor and humble; 5. That he was immediately to precede the Messiah; 6. That his ministry was to usher in that grand revelation of the glory of God in the presence of all flesh, i. e. before all nations of the earth, who were to be called by the Messiah to his religion, according to the express declaration of the Prophets.

The Prophet *Malachi* doth most distinctly represent to us, 1. That the mission of this forerunner was not far off, *Behold*, saith he, *I send my messenger*. He speaks of it as of a thing at the door. Now it is

evident;

(c) R. Saad.

(d) Matth. iii. 1. Mark i. 2.

(e) Ezek. xxxiv. 23, 24.

evident, and the *Jews* themselves own it, that from the time of *Malachi*, there was never a prophet, till the appearance of *John the Baptist*.

2. It tells us that this *Elias* was to call sinners to repentance, and to prepare the way before the face of the Lord.

3. That he was immediately to precede the Messiah: this he expresses by saying, *And the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple, even the Angel of the covenant whom ye delight in.* It is evident that he speaks here of the Messiah, whom he calls, not only the *Angel or Messenger of the covenant*, but also the *Lord (f): the Lord*, forasmuch as God had promised him as a king to the house of *David*; and the *Angel of the covenant*, because God by him was to make a new covenant with the nations of the earth, as *Jeremy* declares, chap. xxxi.

C H A P. XIII.

That the MESSIAH was to be born before the Dissolution of the Jewish State, and the Destruction of the Second Temple.

THE preceding mark of the Messiah leads us to this we are now to speak of, and affords it considerable light. I will not repeat here what I have already set down concerning that prophecy, *Gen. xlix.* verse 10. concerning the time when our Saviour was to appear in the world. It is evident, at first sight, that that prophecy evinces three things: 1. That the *sceptre* was to be in the house of *Judah*, before ever the *Shiloh* was to come. 2. That the *sceptre* was to give way to an inferior dignity, which the Prophet sets forth by the word *lawgiver*; and which did take place till the time of *Zerubbabel*, and his successors. 3. There was a necessity that this last dignity also was to come to an end, which happened not till the advancement of *Herod the Great* to the throne of *Judea*. And it is easy to confirm this truth, by other oracles which give a further light to this our explication.

We have several that are very remarkable upon this account: the first is that of *Daniel*, chap. ii. verse 40, 41, 42, to 46. where he first takes notice of the succession of several monarchies, until that of the Messiah. 2. The time in which the Messiah was to appear. I confess he does not determine the time very precisely, mentioning only the monarchy during which he was to be manifested; but to make amends for this, when he comes to explain the particulars of this prophecy, which before he had proposed in general terms, he doth not only point at the time of his appearance, but the very year of his death; and he does it with that exactness, that it is impossible to be mistaken about it.

See what he saith in the ixth chapter of his *Revelations*, verse 24, 25, 26, 27. *Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up* the

the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Verse 25. Know therefore, and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; the streets shall be built again, and the wall even in troublous times. Verse 26. And after the threescore and two weeks shall MESSIAH be cut off, but not for himself. And the people of the Prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood; and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. Verse 27. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease, and for the overspreading abomination he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined, shall be poured on the desolate.

For the understanding of this prophecy, which is so exact, and all the events it refers to so particularised, it is to be observed:

1. That by the weeks Daniel here speaks of, seven years are designed, according to the style of the law, *Levit. xxv. 8.* when it speaks of the year of jubilee; so that seventy weeks make out 490 years, which is acknowledged by the most learned amongst the Jews, *Jachiades, Abarbanel, and Manasseh Ben Israel.*
2. That the Prophet, writing in *Chaldea*, followed the account of the *Chaldean* year, which consists of 360 days, as appears clearly from other passages of this book, where he resolves the years into days, without regarding the several days which, in a just calculation, were to be intercalated.
3. That the Prophet expresses a certain *epocha* from whence the counting of these weeks is to begin; viz. an order to rebuild the temple, which cannot be applied to that of *Cyrus*, which was in a manner of none effect; nor to the edict of *Darius*, son of *Hystaspes*, which had regard only to the re-establishing of the temple; nor to that of *Artaxerxes*, given to *Ezra* in the seventh year of the reign of that prince, because that contained only some particular privileges for the ministers of the temple: but to the edict which *Artaxerxes* granted to *Nehemiah* in the twentieth year of his reign, which contains a particular grant to rebuild the temple with its fortifications.
4. That God very distinctly marks that the last week was not to be immediately joined with the sixty-nine weeks, by saying that the Messiah was to be cut off after the term of seven weeks and sixty-two weeks expired, instead of saying that he should be cut off in the seventieth week.
5. That, according to this calculation, we find these three parts of this prophecy exactly accomplished. The first, which contains their building of the city, was performed before the end of the seven weeks: the second, concerning the cutting off of the Messiah, has been likewise fulfilled after the sixty-ninth week; Jesus Christ appearing in the 483d year after the twentieth of *Artaxerxes*, and being crucified the nineteenth of *Tiberius*.

As for the last week, it is distinguished by three characters God hath given it, because it was to be separated from the sixty-ninth week by a considerable interval, but yet was never a whit the less exactly accomplished. The first character is, that the people of the prince was to make peace

peace with many, which agrees with the peace the Romans made with the Parthians, of which Tacitus makes mention, *Annal. lib. 15.* which peace was concluded just seven years before the destruction of Jerusalem; the second is, the ceasing of the daily sacrifice, which happened three years and a half after the peace made with the Parthians, as Josephus hath observed; the third is, the destruction of the Jews, which arrived exactly three years and a half after the ceasing of the daily sacrifice, and seven years after the said peace made with the Parthians.

I know that some famous men begin the weeks of Daniel from the second year of Darius Nothus, and make them to end with the destruction of the Jews, which happened in the year 490, accounting from the second year of the said Darius; and they conceive themselves obliged thereto, by an argument they believe invincible, because, from the second year of Darius Nothus to the thirty-second of Artaxerxes Mnemon, they find just forty-nine years, that is, the seven weeks designed by Daniel for rebuilding of the ruins, and fortifying of the city; and the rather, because Nehemiah returned to Artaxerxes in the thirty-second year of his reign, having finished that work, *Nehemiah xiii. 6.*

But this opinion cannot stand, for two reasons, which seem to be decisive: the first is, because they join that which God hath separated, viz. the death of the Messiah with the last week, which ends at the destruction of Jerusalem; the second is, that without thinking of it they deprive Jesus Christ of the glory of having determined the time of the destruction of the Jews, as if, instead of a prophecy about this event, Jesus Christ had only given the world an explication of a former prophecy.

Now these observations being supposed, as indeed they are matters of the greatest evidence, it necessarily follows, that the Messiah was to appear before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. The same is set down so precisely by Daniel, as leaves no pretence to doubt of this truth. And indeed, though the Jews seem, after the time of our Saviour, to have adopted the opinion I mentioned before, and therefore carried the appearing of the Messiah to the end of the seventy weeks, viz. to the destruction of their temple, notwithstanding Daniel expressly tells us that the Jews were not to be destroyed till after the cutting off of the Messiah; the Jews I say, being convinced by the force of this argument, have owned that the Messiah was born about the time of the destruction of the second temple, but that he had hid himself ever since.

The second oracle, concerning the time of the coming of the Messiah, is that of Haggai, which expressly tells us, that the Messiah was to appear during the second temple, which was begun to be built by the order of Cyrus, finished under Darius son of Hystaspes, and destroyed by Vespasian. The words of the Prophet are as follows, chap. ii. ver. 7; 8, 9. *And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come; and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts. The glory of this latter house shall be greater than that of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts: and in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts.* It is worth our noting; 1. That this oracle promises a very great change. 2. It describes the Messiah as the expectation of the Gentiles, suitable to the idea God had given of him to Abraham. 3. That it fixes the coming of the Messiah

to the time of the second house, that is to say, of the temple built by *Zorobabel*. 4. It makes the glory of that house to depend upon its being honoured with the presence of the Messiah.

In short, if we would be convinced of this truth, we need only consider three things. The first is, that the Prophets *Zechariah* and *Malachi* do represent to us the coming of the Messiah as near at hand: *Balaam* had said, almost ten ages before, *I see him, but not nigh*; which intimated his coming to be then at a great distance. But *Zechariah* speaks thus concerning it, chap. iii. vers. 8, 9, 10. *Hear now, O Joshua the high priest, thou and thy fellows that sit before thee, for they are men wondered at: behold, I will bring forth my servant the BRANCH; for behold, the stone that I have laid before Joshua; upon one stone shall be seven eyes; behold, I will engrave the graving thereof, saith the Lord of Hosts, and I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day. In that day, saith the Lord of Hosts, shall ye call every man his neighbour, under the vine and under the fig-tree.*

Malachi expresses himself, concerning the approaching coming of the Messiah, thus: (chap. iii. vers. 1.) *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me; and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple; even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in, behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.*

One ought to observe two very considerable things in this prophecy: the first, that the Messiah was to come suddenly; the second, that *Malachi* expressly points to us, that the appearing of the Messiah was to be during the second temple; the words of the prophecy distinctly expressing it.

And sure it is, that all who gave any credit to these oracles, did understand them so.

The first, both *Jews* and *Gentiles* looked for the Messiah during the second temple. We find a passage express to the purpose in *Tacitus*; and it was on this ground that *Josephus* gave the title of *Messiah* to *Vespasian*.

2. They expected him at the end of the seventy weeks, which was the third year after the death of *Jesus Christ*. This was the occasion of their being deluded by so many false Messiahs, about the time of our Saviour, and a little after.

3. They never despaired of his coming (taking the promise of the Messiah's coming to be conditional, whenas indeed it was absolute) until they began to believe that the term set down by God himself was expired.

4. The reason of their cursing those that compute the times set down so distinctly and precisely by *Daniel*, was, because they found themselves disappointed in his calculation, finding that the time which *Daniel* had pointed at for the coming of the Messiah, seemed to be already expired.

5. It is but of late that they have tried to evade it, by maintaining that the temple will be built a third time, and that then the Messiah shall appear; but this evasion is unanswerably refuted: 1. Because *Daniel* assigns a certain term which is expired 1600 years since; 2. Because he expressly tells us, that the desolation of the temple was to be for ever,

as will appear in the following chapters; and 3dly, because *Haggai* in effect calls the temple of which he speaks, *The second or third house*; by which expression he so distinctly points out the second temple to us, that it would be ridiculous to suppose it meant of a third temple, to be built 1700 years after the ruin of that of which he prophesied.

C H A P. XIV.

That the Messiah was to be born of a Virgin of the House of DAVID.

HITHERTO we have seen that the Messiah was to be born of the posterity of *Abraham* by *Isaac*, of that of *Isaac* by *Jacob*, and of that of *Jacob* by *Judah*. This hath been sufficiently made out already.

I have also shewed from the oracle in the *I. Sam.* chap. vii. that he was to be born of the posterity of *David*; and we find the same very particularly and fully set down in the lxxxixth *Psal.*

The following prophets have expressed themselves to the same purpose; *Isaiah* xi. vers. 1, 2 3. and the prophet *Jeremy* hath pursued the same ideas, chap. xxiii. vers. 5, 6. and chap. xxxiii. vers. 15, 16, 17.

Neither do the prophets only distinguish the Messiah by his being born of a virgin, but also by determining that virgin to the house of *David*. Neither need I repeat here what I have already observed, that this is a truth, the grounds whereof God had laid down in his first promise, viz. *The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head*: where he makes mention of the seed of the woman only, without naming that of the man, the word of *seed* or *posterity* very evidently designing a man to be born of the woman, which is acknowledged by the *Jews* in another prophecy, and the same which the Apostle *St. Paul* (*e*) takes notice of as a maxim generally owned by the doctors of the synagogue. It is also evident that the word *woman* plainly denotes the sex of which this person was immediately to be born.

It was obvious to judge, that something miraculous was to attend the birth of the Messiah. We see *Isaac* born of a barren mother, past the age of child-bearing; we find also something very singular at the birth of *Sampson* and *Samuel*: and it is well known that the promise of the Messiah was something far greater than the birth of these now mentioned, how illustrious soever they might be; and that therefore probably his birth was to be attended by a greater miracle. But because this was a thing wholly new, we ought to observe in what manner God did particularly foretell it.

The prophecy of *Isaiah* expresseth it thus, chap. vii. vers. 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. Moreover the Lord spake again unto *Ahaz*, saying, Ask thee a sign of the Lord thy God, ask it either in the depth, or in the height

above

(e) Galat. iii.

above. But Ahaz said, I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord. And he said, Hear ye now, O house of David, is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good: for before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings. The Lord shall bring upon thee, upon thy people, and upon thy father's house, days that have not come, from the day that Ephraim departed from Judah, even the king of Assyria. Where we may observe,

1. That the promise here is made to a wicked king, but of the family of David, to whom the prophet particularly addresses himself.

2. That this prophecy was given at a juncture of time very capable of awakening their attention to it, at a time when the state of the Jews was reduced to the greatest extremity, and the house of David in particular in a very great consternation.

3. The prophecy was uttered by a very illustrious prophet, who was of the royal family.

4. It was sealed and confirmed with the prediction of the birth of a child, which came to pass accordingly.

5. It is set forth as a very extraordinary sign, instead of that which the wicked king refused to ask, when *Isaiah* offered it him, in the name of God.

I am not ignorant that the modern *Jews* deny that this character of being born of a virgin belongs to the Messiah: but it is an easy matter to confute them.

For, first, would it not have been ridiculous for the apostles to go about to apply this oracle to their Messiah, if it had not been a thing universally owned by the *Jews*, that this was the meaning of *Isaiah's* prophecy? Is it not evident that this character, so difficult to gain belief, would rather perplex than strengthen their proofs? And yet certain it is that *St. Matthew* has done so, chap. i. vers. 23; as likewise *St. Luke*, chap. i. verse 31.

Justin Martyr observed, that the notion of this oracle, as we understand it, hath been entertained amongst the heathens, who built their fable of *Persus* upon it, whom they pretend to have been born of a virgin.

3. It appears that all those laws which I mentioned in my reflexions upon *Exodus*, and the following books, chap. xx. and which have relation to the distinct knowledge of the state of virginity, receive much light from this notion; and are, without it, altogether useless.

4. It is evident that the *Jews* did not dispute this character, till after they saw that the Christians applied it to Jesus Christ; and thereupon have fallen upon such childish fancies as may justly cover them with confusion.

But we shall be yet further satisfied hereof, if we add to all these just prejudices, only the following reflexions on the terms the prophet makes use of.

The first is, that the seventy interpreters have, in translating this prophecy,

phesy, made use of a word that signifies a virgin, and not a young woman, as the *Jews* have understood it since our Saviour's time. The first who rejected the interpretation of the *Septuagint* was *Symmachus* (f), who lived in the second century, as it is observed by *Justin Martyr* and *Tertullian*, who for this reason accuse the *Jews* of having falsified the holy scripture.

The second is, That the *Hebrew* word expressly signifies such an one as, according to the law of virgins, was kept under lock and key from the eyes of men, according to the custom of the eastern nations, and especially of the *Jews*, which continues amongst them till this day.

The third is, That this word hath been taken by the *Africans* in the same signification, as St. *Jerome* observes.

The fourth is, That the prophet doth set forth this child-bearing as a prodigy and miracle altogether unheard-of, and as a particular character, by which the house of *David* was to be strongly confirmed in the hope of seeing the accomplishment of the promise which God had made of settling an eternal kingdom upon it, which could not be accomplished but by means of the Messiah.

The fifth is, That though some *Jews* have applied this prophecy to king *Hezekiah* (g); which yet to others of them seems very ridiculous, he being nine years of age when the prophecy was uttered by *Isaiah*, and themselves never making use of this evasion, except in their disputes against the Christians, and so on this occasion have dropped a confession which alone was sufficient to confound them; yet it hath been a thing so generally received amongst them, that this prophecy did respect the Messiah, that, after they had applied it to *Hezekiah*, one of their most famous doctors concludes (h), that they ought to look for no Messiah, since the time of *Hezekiah*, that prophecy having had its accomplishment in him; an opinion which those that succeeded him have rejected with the greatest abhorrence.

The sixth is, That the title of *Immanuel*, given to this son, whose birth is here promised, is represented to us, chap. viii. as the name of him who was lord of the land; which is a true representation of the heir promised to *David*, to whom *David* said, O God, thy God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. *Psalms* xlv. 7, 8.

The seventh is, That the prophet *Isaiah* having alledged and cited two witnesses, *Uriah*, the son of *Shemaiah*, a prophet, who was put to death by *Jehoiakim*, and *Zechariah* the son of *Jeberechiah*; the former of which lived long after *Abaz*, and the latter since the captivity, under *Darius* king of *Persia*, according to the account the *Jews* themselves give of them; he sufficiently hints, by this circumstance, that the prophecy concerning the birth of the *Immanuel* he speaks of, was to be fulfilled many ages after, and not in that age wherein he prophesies.

(f) In *Dialog. cum Tryphon. Tertull. cont. Jud. cap. 9.*

(g) *Raschi* in h. l.

(h) *Gemara* in *Sanhed. Cap. Chelech.*

C H A P. XV.

That the MESSIAH was to be born at Bethlehem of the Family of David, which at that Time was reduced to a private State.

GOD had not only pointed out the time in which the Messiah was to appear, with the miraculous manner and circumstances of his birth; but he had also named the family, the place, with the state and condition of the family in which he was to be born, as a triple character by which he might be known.

I say, first, That according to the Divine oracles, the Messiah was to be born of the family of *David*, as will appear if we consider the following oracles.

1. God expressly promiseth as much to *David*, II. Sam. chap. vii. a place I have quoted before, which proves that the Messiah was to be born of the family of *David*.

2. It appeareth that *David* believed this himself, from *Psalms* cxxxii. verse 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18. *The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.* And after having said, verse 12. *That if his children would keep his covenant, that their children also should sit upon his throne for evermore;* and this, because (verse 13 and 14) *the Lord had chosen Zion, and desired it for his habitation, &c.* and promised, verse 15, that he would abundantly bless her provision, and satisfy her poor with bread; that he would, verse 16, *clothe her priests with salvation, and make her saints shout for joy;* he subjoins, verse 17 and 18, *There I will make the born of David to bud; I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed. His enemies I will clothe with shame; but upon himself shall his crown flourish.* It is very evident, that by this *born of David* is to be meant a king, the Messiah, whom he distinguishes by that expression from all the rest of *David's* children. And *Zachariah*, in his song of praise, *Luke* i. verse 69, applying it to our Saviour, puts the matter out of all doubt.

3. Hence it was the Prophets took occasion to give the Messiah the name of *David*. So *Ezek.* xxxiv. verse 23, 24. *And I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. And I the Lord will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them: I the Lord have spoken it.*

4. The *Jews* are, and have always been, firm in this persuasion, grounded on the foresaid and other like places of Scripture, which they constantly refer to the Messiah.

I say, in the second place, That the Divine oracles expressly point out *Bethlehem* for the birth-place of the Messiah. *Micah*, chap. v. verse 2. *But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me, that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity.*

The *Jews* acknowledge that this oracle speaks of the Messiah; and indeed the Prophet, distinguishing by *Bethlehem*, adding the word *Ephratah* (whence the family of *David* was), from that *Bethlehem* which belonged to

to another tribe, makes it apparent that nothing could be spoken more distinctly to determine the birth-place of the Messiah. Besides, we find that all the *Jewish* Rabbies and Priests agree in this, That the Messiah was to be born at *Beitblehem*, when, being consulted by *Herod* about this matter, they declared this to be their sense, grounded upon the fore-mentioned place of *Micah*, *Matibew* ii. verse 4, 5, 6.

In the third place, it appears that the Messiah was to be born in an abject, contemptible, and weak condition, and very different from the greatness of the kings of *Judah*. Indeed, should we only have our eye on *II. Sam.* chap. vii. and *Psalms* cxxxii. it would be natural enough to think the contrary: but *Micah's* oracle sufficiently refutes them; for how great things soever the Prophet there speaks of the Messiah, whether as to his divine nature, by declaring that his goings forth were from the days of eternity, or to the majesty and glory of his empire, yet however he gives us a different idea, inducing us to conceive of him, as of one that was to be born in the state of a private person; for why else is his birth determined, not to *Zion*, which was the place and seat of the empire of *Judah*, but to *Beitblehem*, a town where the family of *David* lived; whilst they were private persons, except for this cause, to make us conceive that the Messiah was not to be born in that place where the family of *David* possessed the empire, but in a condition far distant from the glory of kings, and in a place where the house of *David* was contemptible, and of very small esteem?

The same is hinted to us by *Isaiah*, in his xth chapter, v. 1. where he calls the Messiah *a rod*, or shoot of the stem of *Jesse*. Now *Jesse* was not king, but a private person. And on the same account it is that the Prophet describes him, chap. liii. as having *no form or comeliness*.

The Prophet *Zachary* also, chap. ix. verse 9. represents him, not as a king sitting on the throne in *Zion*, but as riding to *Jerusalem* on an ass; and he gives him the title of *Lowly*, which signifies as well a mean condition, as the virtue of humility.

But, in short, this is very considerable: 1. That those who acknowledged *Jesus* to be the Messiah, thought they had the greatest reason so to do, because they acknowledged him to be the son of *David*:

2. That those who denied him that title, thought themselves sufficiently justified in so doing, by esteeming him a *Nazarene*; as concluding he could not be the son of *David*, if he were born at *Nazareth*, as they supposed.

3. The Evangelists precisely tell us, that *Christ* was born at *Beitblehem*, of the lineage of *David*, reduced to a very obscure condition; and so making this one of the chief characters which spoke him to be the Messiah.

C H A P. XVI.

That the MESSIAH was to work great Miracles, for the establishing of his Mission, and of the Truth of his Doctrine.

HERE is another character which is very particular, and whereby the Messiah might be certainly known, viz. That he was to work great miracles for the confirmation of his mission and of his doctrine.

This appears, as I have already hinted, 1. From the conformity which the Messiah was to have with *Moses*, in being the founder of a new religious society, and in proposing a new doctrine to men; upon which account there lay upon him the same obligation as upon *Moses*, to support his authority by miracles, that even in this he might not be inferior to him.

2. One may gather this also from the title of *Prophet*, and *great Prophet*, which are applicable to the Messiah; it being difficult to conceive, that God, who vouchsafed the glory of doing miracles to most of the Prophets, though they were barely sent to foretel the coming of the Messiah, and to give an account of him, should have denied the same glory and the same power to the Messiah himself, of whom all the Prophets were but the forerunners.

Besides, it is easy to judge, from the mean and contemptible state wherein the Messiah was to appear, that this glory of doing miracles was of absolute necessity, to give him authority and respect; for, since he was to be born in an obscure condition, and not in royal grandeur, it is evident that the gift of miracles was needful to make him known, and counterbalance that low and opprobrious condition in which he was to appear in the world.

But this particularly appears from an express oracle which God gave upon this very subject, in *Isaiah xxxv.* vers. 3, 4, 5, and 6. *Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not; behold, your God will come with vengeance, even God, with a recompense; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.* Which oracle very fully expresses the power of Miracles wherewith our Saviour was to be dignified, in curing all manner of diseases, of which the Prophet hath named some only, to give us a specimen of the rest; and it seems as if the Prophet had chosen these four sorts before all others, because throughout the whole Scripture we do not find that ever any Prophet did the like, that so the character of the Messiah might be particular in his miracles too.

It is also worth our noting, in giving a character of the Messiah, first, That even those who rejected Jesus Christ, yet did at the same time suppose that the Messiah, when he came, was to work miracles. Therefore it is that we hear some of them saying to Christ, *What sign dost thou?* and

and others maintaining that *Moses* had wrought greater wonders than *Jesus Christ*, in giving them bread from heaven, and feeding them miraculously for the space of forty years; whilst others affirmed, that none could work greater wonders than he wrought: *When the Messiah shall come, will he do greater wonders than this man?*

Secondly, one ought to observe that *Jesus Christ* alledges this oracle of the Prophet *Isaiab*, taking it for granted that the accomplishment thereof was most visibly evident in the miracles which he wrought, as appears from the answer he gave to the messengers of *John the Baptist*.

Thirdly, it is also observable, That those who were willing to flatter the vanity of the emperor *Vespasian* (whom *Josephus* endeavoured to raise to a belief that he was the Messiah, because he had been proclaimed in the east, applying to that purpose the words of *Micah*, misapplied, chap. v. verse 2. *Whose goings forth are from the east*) were not wanting to attribute to him the glory of doing miracles, and such as *Isaiab* ascribes to the Messiah, by attributing to him the cure of one that was blind, and another that was lame at *Alexandria*. He that would know the particulars, may consult *Tacitus's* history.

And, last of all, we ought to observe, That the *Jews* do not only agree that this oracle of *Isaiab* refers to the Messiah; but they also still propose the power of working miracles, as a character which would render the Messiah very illustrious, and certainly known.

C H A P. XVII.

That the MESSIAH was to be an illustrious Prophet.

THIS truth I have already asserted in the Reflexions I made on the prophecy of *Moses*, *Deut. xviii*. But one ought to explain this character of the Messiah more particularly, God having been pleased further to illustrate this oracle of *Moses*.

First, then, we say that the word Messiah implies anointing, which was common to kings, prophets, and priests; and since *David's* time, we find nothing more common than this title in the books of the *Old Testament*: where we may observe that *Moses* was dignified with this gift of prophecy; and that *Samuel* communicated the same to *Saul* and *David*, when he anointed them to be kings. Yea, the *Jews* to this day are of opinion, that *Elias* the Prophet shall anoint the Messiah; that is, initiate him in his prophetical, as well as his royal function.

Secondly, God more precisely signifies this, *Isai. xi. vers. 1, 2, and 3.* where he declares he would communicate all the necessary gifts of the prophetical function to the Messiah. *There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord.*

that he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears.

These words need no commentary; for the Jews refer them constantly to the Messiah; and they plainly import that he was to be a great Prophet, forasmuch as all the characters which are there given to the Spirit which was to rest on the Messiah, are the same which in the *Old Testament* we find attributed to the Prophets, and may easily be taken notice of in the history of the Prophets, especially of *David* and *Solomon*.

And much to the same purpose is that passage, *Isai. xlii. verse 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the street. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not fail, nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law. Thus saith God the Lord, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath to the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house. In which oracle one ought to take notice particularly of those things which the Jews apply to the Messiah.*

1. That God proposes the gifts of the spirit, which he bestowed upon him as an effect of his love, and the choice he had made of him.

2. That the Messiah was to make use of the same, as rules for reforming the country, and propounding God's covenant to the *Gentiles*; which clearly suppose the necessity of the gift of prophecy to qualify him for such great undertakings.

3. That, contrary to the thundering character which distinguished the rest of the Prophets, who were as so many public censors, the Messiah was to speak with all meekness and sweetness to the nations which should receive his preaching.

One sees that *Isaiah* repeats the same ideas, chap. lxi. verse 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. *The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks; and the sons of the alien shall be your ploughmen, and your vine dressers. But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord; men shall call you the Ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves. For your shame ye shall have double, and for confusion they shall rejoice in their portion:*

portion : therefore in their land they shall possess the double ; everlasting joy shall be upon them.

In short, he represents, in this and the former oracle, the *Gentiles* as a people being in darkness, and in the misery of a prison ; from whence we may easily infer, first, That the Messiah was to be a Prophet, how vile and abject soever that character may appear in the eyes of the world, as I have shewed that it was, where I spake of the Prophets in general ; secondly, That he was to discharge these functions during the whole course of his life, and that it was to be his chief employment here upon earth.

David had before signified, *Psalms* xxii. verse 22. that the Messiah was to declare the name of God unto his brethren, viz. the *Jews*, by exercising his prophetic function in *Judea* ; but the Holy Spirit did something more, when he seemed to point out *Galilee* as the place where this sacred Doctor was chiefly to fix his abode.

This is in effect insinuated, when God tells us that he was to begin his ministerial functions in the tribes of *Naphtali* and *Zebulon*. *Isai.* ix. verse 1, 2, and 3. Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of *Zebulon*, and the land of *Naphtali*, and afterwards did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond *Jordan* in *Galilee* of the nations. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light ; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. Thou hast multiplied the nation, thou hast increased the joy : they joy before thee according to the joy in harvest, and as men rejoice when they divide the spoil.

I shall afterwards take notice, That the time of the Messiah was to be distinguished by an incredible abundance of spiritual gifts : and so this shall suffice at present to prove that the Messiah was to be a very great Prophet.

C H A P. XVIII.

That the MESSIAH was to propound a new Covenant from God with all Men.

THIS is a truth which is easily gathered : 1. Because all nations, before they could be made partakers of the blessing of God by the Messiah (according to the promise made to *Abraham*), were first to be received into the covenant ; 2. From the nature of that covenant itself, of which *Moses* was the mediator, the end of which was, to separate the *Jews* from other nations, some of which were not capable of being received amongst them, till after several generations, whereas they were to be made partakers of this blessing by the Messiah ; 3. Because in effect all the ceremonial law was only added to the moral, as it were, contrary to God's principal intention, and only upon occasion of

the Jews worshipping the golden calf, as St. Paul observes in the third chapter of his epistle to the Galatians (i).

Besides, it appears that God at divers times had given sufficient hints concerning this.

1. He had proposed a new priesthood of the Messiah, which was to abolish the Levitical priesthood; and this is the more remarkable, forasmuch as David, who pronounced that oracle, *Psalms* cx. was he who first formed the design of building the temple, to which all the Levitical service was annexed.

2. We find him rejecting in some sort the Levitical ministry, after he had despised it in comparison of the spiritual worship. *Psalms* xl. vers. 6. *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt-offering and sin-offering hast thou not required.* And *Psalms* l. vers. 8, 9, 10. *I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices or thy burnt-offerings, which have been continually before me. I will take no bullocks out of thine house, nor he-goats out of thy folds; for every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills.* And *Psalms* li. verse 17. he tells us that the sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; in opposition to the sacrifices which the law prescribed, and to signify their imperfection; the law having appointed none for the expiation of murder or adultery.

Isaiah follows David, chap. i. vers. 11, 12, 13, 14, and 15. *To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts: and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. When you come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hands to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me: the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons, and your appointed feasts, my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when you spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when you make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood.* And *Jeremiah* speaks much to the same purpose, chap. vii. vers. 21, 22, and 23.

But besides, God directly promiseth this new covenant by *Isaiah*, chap. xlii. vers. 6, 7. *I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness from the prison-house.*

It is natural to observe, that in this place, where God speaks of the Messiah, as the Jews themselves confess, he expressly declares two things: 1. That the Messiah should be a covenant of the people, that is, that he should mediate a covenant between God and the people; 2. That the fruit of this covenant was to extend to the Gentiles, which plainly implies that it was not the old covenant, forasmuch as from it several were excluded.

The same covenant is also mentioned, chap. xlix. vers. 8, 9. *Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages. That thou mayst say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness,*

darkness, *Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places.*

He pursues the same notion, chap. lv. vers. 3, 4. *Incline your ear, and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, the sure mercies of David. Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people. Than which, nothing can be more particular.*

And to the same purpose he speaks, chap. lxi. vers. 8, 9. *For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt-offering; and I will direct their work in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them. And their seed shall be known among the Gentiles, and their offspring among the people; all that see them shall acknowledge them; that they are the seed which the Lord hath blessed.*

It is as clear as the day, that God in these oracles promiseth an irrevocable covenant, because he calls it an *everlasting covenant* in opposition to the former. He takes notice also in the same book, that the said covenant was to be propounded in the midst of the nations; and that then that blessing of God should be known according to the ancient oracles, which was promised universally to all nations.

This is that which God more particularly explains afterwards, by the voice and pen of a Prophet who was of the order of Priests, thereby to prevent all sorts of exceptions.

Jeremiah in effect speaks to the same purpose, chap. xxxi. vers. 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, and 36. *Behold, the day is come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt (which my covenant they break, although I were a husband to them, saith the Lord); but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel: After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their heart; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more. Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of Hosts is his name. If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever.*

Nothing can be desired more particular than this oracle. 1. It tells us that God would make a new covenant with his people, which supposes an abolishing of the former; 2. That this covenant was not to be like the foregoing; 3. That the old covenant had been made vain, and had been broken by those with whom it was made; 4. That this covenant was to be made *after those days*, that is, in the time of the Messiah; 5. That this new covenant was not to be engraven in tables of stone, but in their hearts; 6. That in the same covenant full remission of sin is promised.

The same thing is also expressed, chap. xxxii. verse 40. *And I will make an everlasting covenant with them; that I will not turn away from them*

to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me. And, chap. l. v. 5. *They shall ask the way to Zion, with their faces thitherward, saying, Come, and let us join ourselves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten.*

To this purpose also Ezekiel, who himself was a Priest, speaks of a religious worship extended to all nations, and of a new covenant which God was to make with them, chap. xvi. verse 60, 61, 62. *Nevertheless I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways, and be ashamed, when thou shalt receive thy sisters, thy elder and thy younger: and I will give them unto thee for daughters, but not by thy covenant. And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord.*

Here is, first, a covenant differing from the former; 2. a covenant wherein other nations were to be included, clearly intimated by the *elder and younger sisters* of the Synagogue; 3. a covenant whereby the *Gentiles* were to enjoy the same privileges with the *Jews*, and be incorporated with them.

Malachi follows the steps of these Prophets, when he calls the Messiah *the Angel of the covenant*, chap. iii. verse 1. *Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple; even the messenger (Angel) of the covenant, whom ye delight in, behold he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts. I know very well that the Jews apply those words to Elias, whose ministry, as they pretend, was to consist in leading the Jews to repentance. But if we read the text with attention, we shall find two messengers mentioned; the first, to prepare the way of the Messiah; and the other is the Messiah himself, who is called the Angel of the covenant, as being sent of God to make a new covenant with men.*

C H A P. XIX.

That the JEWS, by a dreadful Effect of their Blindness, were to reject the MESSIAH.

THIS is a very peculiar mark, which will guide us surely to the knowledge of the Messiah. We find the *Jews* at this day very ready to follow every one that usurps that august title, and to take him for the only true Messiah that was promised them; which is no other than what was infallibly to come to pass.

Neither will this much surprise us, if we consider, 1. That this people, on divers occasions, have given very strange instances of a prodigious blindness: we see them reject *Moses*, notwithstanding God had authorised his call by great and avowed miracles; yea, we find them rejecting *David* also, whom God had so signally appointed to be their king, and the father of the Messiah, of whom we hear these prophecies.

2. That

2. That God upbraids them with this blindness by his Prophets, as a sin to which they were peculiarly inclined; as appears from *Psalms* lxix. verse 23, 24, 25, 26, and 28. *Let their eyes be darkened, that they see not; and make their loins continually to shake. Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them. Let their habitation be desolate, and none dwell in their tents. For they persecute him whom thou hast smitten, and they talk to the grief of those whom thou hast wounded. Add iniquity to their iniquity; and let them not come into thy righteousness. Let them be blotted out of the book of the living, and not be written with the righteous.*

One sees the same thing in *Isaiah*, chap. vi. verse 9, 10, 11, and 12. where the Spirit of God foretels that the *Jews* should shut their eyes against the most evident and convincing proofs imaginable. *Go, saith the Lord to the Prophet, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed. Then said I, Lord, how long? And he answered, Until the cities be wasted without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate: and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land.*

Nothing can be imagined more particular than this oracle concerning the *Jews* resisting the Prophet, which God expresses in terms very usual amongst the Prophets; as if *Isaiah*, who was only the foreteller of their being hardened, should himself be the cause of it.

The Prophet *Hosea* describes the very same complaints of God against the *Jews* for their blindness and ignorance, for which he denounces their destruction. *Hos. iv. verse 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel; for the Lord has a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood. Therefore shall the land mourn, and every one that dwelleth therein shall languish, with the beasts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven; yea, the fishes of the sea also shall be taken away. Yet let no man strive or reprove another; for thy people are as they that strive with the Priest. Therefore shalt thou fall in the day, and the Prophet also shall fall with thee in the night, and I will destroy thy mother. My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no Priest to me; seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children.*

The Prophet *Jeremy* speaks to the same purpose, chap. v. verse 21, 22, and 23. *Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not. Fear ye not me, saith the Lord? Will ye not tremble at my presence, who have placed the sand for the bound of the sea, by a perpetual decree that it cannot pass it; and though the waves thereof toss themselves, yet can they not prevail; though they roar, yet can they not pass over it? But this people had a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted, and gone. And he reiterates the same, chap. viii. verse 7. The stork in the heavens knoweth her appointed times; and the turtle and*

and the crane, and the swallow, observe the time of their coming : but my people know not the judgment of the Lord.

Ezekiel prosecutes the same matter, chap. ii. vers. 5 and 8. calling the Jews a rebellious house. And chap. xii. vers. 1 and 2. he saith, *The word of the Lord came unto me, saying, Son of man, thou dwellest in the midst of a rebellious house, who have eyes to see, and see not, they have ears to hear, and hear not, for they are a rebellious house.*

Neither do the Prophets only represent to us in general the blindness of the Jews upon several occasions ; but they also very particularly inform us, that he who was the most considerable person of their state, and the great minister of God, should be notwithstanding rejected by them.

And here, first, It is worth our noting, that *Moses* threatens the worst of calamities to those who should refuse to hear the great Prophet, like unto him whom God was to raise to his people, *Deut. xviii. verse 18.*

Secondly, *David, Psalm cxviii. verse 22.* expresses this in these words, *The stone which the builders refused, is become the head of the corner.* From which words it is evident, 1. That the Messiah was to be rejected ; 2. That he was to be rejected by those who were intrusted with the care of building the house ; 3. That this was to be before he should be acknowledged the great Minister of heaven.

God speaks the same thing by *Isaiab*, chap. xxviii. verse 16. *Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation : he that believeth shall not make haste.* Which place is to be understood of the Messiah, by the confession of the Jews themselves.

Daniel follows the same notion, chap. ii. vers. 34, 35. *Thou sawest till a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet, and brake them to pieces : and the stone became a great mountain, and filled the earth.*

On all which prophecies we may make these remarks : 1. That Jesus Christ quotes most of them, as such, which by the Jews themselves were owned to refer to the Messiah. Thus, *Matt. xxi. verse 42.* he saith, *Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner.* And *St. Peter, Acts iv. verse 11.* *This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the corner.* *St. Paul* makes the same allusion, *Ephes. ii. verse 20.* *And are built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.* And *I. Cor. iii. verse 11.* *For other foundation can no man lay, than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* And when Jesus Christ himself saith unto *Peter, Matt. xvi. verse 18.* *Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, &c.* he alludes to that of *Daniel* ; *Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them : and the stone which smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.*

Our Saviour applies also to the Jews those prophecies which foretel their being offended at the Ministers of heaven ; in particular that of *Isaiab*,

Isaiah, chap. vi. verse 9. *Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not, and see ye indeed, but perceive not.*

2. We may observe that the *Jews* of old applied those prophecies (as the Apostles did) to the hardening of their own nation; as appears from that of St. Paul, *Rom. x. verse 21. But to Israel he saith, All the day long I have stretched forth my hand unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

3. We must take notice, that the same temper which was in the ancient *Jews*, who rejected the Prophets, was found in those who lived at the time of our Saviour; and for this, we need only to read the description which *Josephus*, *de Bello Judaico*, lib. vii. cap. 3. gives of them, where he compares them with the *Sodomites*, which is the comparison *Isaiah* makes, chap. i. verse 10.

And last of all, we may take notice, That *Josephus* acknowledges that this blindness of the *Jews* was the cause of the final destruction of *Jerusalem*, which was to succeed the death of the Messiah, according to the express oracle of *Daniel*, chap. ix. verse 26.

CH A P. XX.

That the MESSIAH was to die; and an Account of the several Circumstances of his Death.

TO be convinced of this truth, we need only prove that what is set down in *Psalms* xxii. *Isaiah* liii. *Daniel* ix. and *Zachariah* xiii. and other prophetic passages of holy Scripture, is to be understood of the Messiah; and the reading of them alone is sufficient to satisfy the meanest capacity, that the person they point at was to lose his life by violence, with several very infamous circumstances.

Now it is certain that both ancient and modern *Jews* interpret these places of the Messiah; and it is as evident that the Apostles understood them so; and therefore all along applied them to Jesus Christ, following therein the known explications of the Rabbies of their own nation.

It is plain also, that the death and suffering of our Saviour would have proved a more efficacious argument to refute the Apostles, than all the miracles of Jesus Christ could have been to establish their doctrine, if the prophetic writings had not so precisely determined his sufferings and death, with the several circumstances of them.

It is also to be noted, that the prophecies referring to the death of the Messiah are generally interwoven with ideas which point to other prophetic passages avowedly owned by the *Jews* to have relation to the Messiah. Thus, if we compare *Psalms* xxii. verse 28. with *Psalms* lxxii. vers. 8, 9. we shall find the same idea set forth in them both.

And because this character was to be the most proper and distinguishing note of the Messiah, forasmuch as none with pleasure do precipitate themselves into death, or are masters of the manner and circumstances of

of it, therefore God caused the same to be expressed by the Prophets with the greatest plainness and exactness possible.

It cannot be denied but that some of the Prophets have been very cruelly persecuted, and that some of them have died in the midst of torments: but concerning the death of Christ we have many more particulars, viz.

1. That he was to be forsaken by his own friends, *Psalms* xxii. verse 11. *Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help.* And *Psalms* lxxix. verse 11. *I made sackcloth also my garment, and I became a proverb to them.* And, verse 20. *Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness; and I looked for some to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none.*

2. That he was to be exposed to all manner of reproachful usage. *Psalms* xxii. verse 6, 7, and 8. *But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me, laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him.* And *Psalms* lxxix. verse 1, 2, 3, 4. *Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying: my throat is dried: mine eyes fail, while I wait for my God. They that hate me without cause are more than the hairs of my head; they that would destroy me, being my enemies wrongfully, are mighty.*

The same is represented to us, *Isaiah* liii. verse 4, 5. *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him: and with his stripes we are healed.*

3. They take notice that he should be beaten and abused, as appears from *Isaiah* liii. verse 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. *He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid, as it were, our faces from him: he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, he was wounded for our transgressions, &c. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter; and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken.*

4. They declare that he should be sold. *Zech.* xi. verse 12 and 13. *And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear: so they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the Lord said unto me, Cast it unto the potter; a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter, in the house of the Lord.*

5. They make mention of his being condemned by the Jews and Heathens. *Psalms* ii. verse 2. *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord and against his anointed.* And *Psalms* xxii. verse 16. *For dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have inclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet.* And *Psalms* lxxix. verse 12. *They that sit in the gate speak against me, and I was the song of the drunkards.* And *Isaiah* liii. verse 8. *He was taken from prison and from judgment:*

judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off from the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken.

6. They specify his death on the cross. *Psalms* xxii. verse 16. *They pierced my hands and my feet.* And *Zech.* xii. verse 10. *And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced.*

7. They intimate his dying between thieves. *Isaiah* liii. verse 12. *Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he has poured out his soul unto death, and was numbered with transgressors.*

8. They take notice of his being mocked before his death. *Psalms* xxii. verse 6, 7, 8. *But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people. All they that see me, laugh me to scorn; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, &c.* And *Psalms* lxix. verse 17, 18, 19. *Hide not thy face from thy servant, for I am in trouble; hear me speedily. Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it: deliver me, because of mine enemies. Thou hast known my reproach, my shame, and my dishonour: mine adversaries are all before thee.*

9. That they who put him to death should divide his garments. *Psalms* xxii. verse 18. *They part my garments amongst them, and cast lots upon my vesture.*

10. That the Messiah should complain that God had forsaken him in the hands of his enemies. *Psalms* xxii. verse 1, 2. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? why art thou so far from helping me, and from the words of my roaring? O my God, I cry in the day time, and thou hearest me not; and in the night season am not silent.*

11. That they would give him vinegar and gall to drink. *Psalms* lxix. verse 21. *They gave me also gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.*

12. They set before our eyes the manner of his death on the cross. *Psalms* xxii. verse 14, 15, 16, 17. *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint: my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws: and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. For dogs have compassed me, the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me; they pierced my hands and my feet. I may tell all my bones: they look and stare upon me. And* *Isaiah* liii. verse 7, 8, 9.

13. That not one of his bones should be broken. *Psalms* xxxiv. verse 20. *He keepeth all his bones; not one of them is broken.*

14. That he was to be buried in the sepulchre of a rich man. *Isaiah* liii. verse 9. *He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was deceit found in his mouth.*

We may make these following reflexions on the foregoing oracles.

1. That here are many very different events and circumstances, all meeting in the same end.

2. That many of these passages that might be questioned whether they were particularly applicable to the Messiah, are joined with such hints as can no way agree with the Prophets that uttered them. Thus we find that in the *xxiiid Psalm* there are many expressions which cannot be applied to David.

3. That

3. That most of these prophecies are avowedly attributed to the Messiah by the most ancient authors of the Synagogue. And the modern *Jews* themselves refer them to some that suffered a violent death, as to Rabbi *Akiba*, who died in the second century.

4. That the Apostles unanimously applied them to Jesus Christ, the true Messiah, following therein the general consent of their nation.

C H A P. XXI.

That the MESSIAH was soon after to rise again.

FORASMUCH as death entered into the world by sin, and that the Messiah was to take it away, we may easily conceive, that if the Messiah were, according to the Divine disposal, to submit to death, he could not long continue subject to it. He who was to restore life to those who were dead, could never be confined and imprisoned in a grave: and he who was superior to *Enoch* and *Elias*, who ascended into heaven, because he alone was exalted to the right hand of God, to reign there for ever, as the prophecies concerning him assure us, ought certainly to leave his sepulchre by a glorious resurrection.

And this we are positively assured of by the ancient oracles. *Psalms* xvi. vers. 10, 11. *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is fulness of joy, at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.* And to assure us that these and the like passages are applicable to none but the Messiah, we find in the same *Psalms* expressions too high to be applied to the authors themselves: as for example, *Psalms* xxx. vers. 1, 2, 3. *I will extol thee, O Lord, for thou hast lifted me up, and hast not made my foes to rejoice over me. O Lord, my God, I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me. O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from the grave, thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. And Psalms* xli. vers. 8, 9, 10. *An evil disease, say they, cleaveth fast unto him; and now that he lieth, he shall rise up no more. Yea, mine own familiar friend in whom I trusted, which did eat of my bread, hath lift up his heel against me. But thou, O Lord, be merciful unto me, and raise me up, that I may requite them. And Psalms* xlix. vers. 15. *But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave, for he shall receive me. Psalms* lvi. vers. 11, 12, 13. *In God have I put my trust, I will not be afraid what man can do unto me. Thy vows are upon me, O God, I will render praise unto thee. For thou hast delivered my soul from death, &c. Psalms* lxxi. verse 20. *Thou who hast shewed me great and sore trouble, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Psalms* cxliii. vers. 11, 12. *Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake, for thy righteousness sake bring my soul out of trou-*

ble: and of thy mercy cut off mine enemies, and destroy all them that afflict my soul, for I am thy servant.

Hosea speaks to the same purpose, chap. xiii. verse 14. *I will ransom them from the power of the grave, I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be bid from mine eyes.*

Isaiah expresses the very same thing, chap. xxv. verse 8. *He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it. And yet more expressly, chap. liii. vers. 10 and 11. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travel of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.*

For the better understanding of which passages, we are to observe,
1. That the Messiah, in many or most of them, compriseth all believers with himself, according to that maxim of the *Jews*, who attribute to the Messiah, the greatest of all the Prophets, whatsoever God vouchsafed to any one of the Prophets; and according to this principle *Jesus Christ* speaks, *Matth. xii. vers. 39, 40. An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.*

2. That upon this account the Messiah is represented to us, not as rising again alone, but as making all his brethren partakers of the same glory; which makes the Prophets speak of him, not as a single person, but in common with others, who by him are made possessors of the same advantages.

3. That most of these texts are quoted by the Apostles, who in so doing followed the sense of the whole nation, as appears from *Acts ii. vers. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29. Whom God hath raised, having loosed the pains of death; because it was not possible that he should be holden of it. For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is at my right hand, that I should not be moved. Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad: moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life: thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the Patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. And *Acts xiii. vers. 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, and 37. But God raised him from the dead. And he was seen many days of them which came up with him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are his witnesses unto the people. And we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second Psalm, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the dead, now no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David.**

Wherefore he saith also in another Psalm, *Thou shalt not suffer thine holy one to see corruption.* For David, after he had served his own generation, by the will of God fell asleep, and was gathered to his fathers, and saw corruption. But he whom God raised again, saw no corruption.

In like manner we find St. Paul alluding to that of Hosea xiii. verse 14. in I. Cor. xv. verse 55. *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?*

C H A P. XXII.

That the MESSIAH was to ascend into Heaven, and send down from thence the miraculous gifts of Prophecy, Languages, &c.

THIS was a thing which might rationally enough be expected (b); for the Messiah being to resemble *Moses*, who had not only the gifts of the holy spirit himself, but also in a manner communicated the same to the heads of the congregation of *Israel*, it was reasonable to infer, that the Messiah was to receive much more eminent gifts, and to communicate them to far greater numbers.

But besides this, God had expressly promised it by *David*, Psalm cx. vers. 1, 2. where he represents the Messiah sitting at the right hand of God. *The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.*

It is worth our noting, that *Daniel* represents to us the same notion, where he speaks of the kingdom of the Messiah, chap. vii. vers. 13, 14. *I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed. Where doth God dwell, unless in heaven?*

David expresses himself in terms which import something too great to be applied to the symbolical ark of the covenant, Psalm xxiv. vers. 7, 8, 9. *Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the king of glory shall come in. Who is this king of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle, &c.*

He speaks further of the glorious kingdom of the Messiah, Psalm xlv. vers. 5, 6, 7. *Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the sceptre of thy kingdom is a right sceptre. Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* It is evident that *David* addresses himself there to the Messiah, because he styles him a God anointed above his fellows.

(b) Deut. xviii. 18.

lows. And he pursues the same idea, *Psalms* lxxviii. verse 18. *Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive; thou hast received gifts for men, yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell amongst them.* Nothing can be imagined more express than these words, which lively represent to us the ascension of the Messiah, and the pouring forth of prophetic gifts, to bring the heathens to the service of God.

Isaiah speaks the same, chap. xlv. verse 3. *For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring.* The waters here spoken of, according to the ordinary style of the Prophets, are nothing else but the Graces of God's Spirit.

Joel expresses himself very plainly in this matter, chap. ii. verse 28, 29, 30, 31, 32. *And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants, and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be delivered: for in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.*

Nothing can be conceived more particular than this oracle, concerning the effusion of the prophetic gifts upon the servants of the Messiah, after his ascension. For, 1. He clearly hints at the several ways of prophecy which shall be bestowed upon the subjects of the Messiah; 2. That this great event was to be before the destruction of Jerusalem, which *St. Peter* foretels as a thing at the door, *Acts* ii. vers. 30, 31, 32. After he had shewed that the wonderful effusion of the Spirit at Pentecost was a literal accomplishing of the prophecy of *Joel*, he adds, *Therefore being a Prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne: he seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus has God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.*

Ezekiel goes on with the same views with *Joel*, chap. xxxvi. vers. 26 and 27. *A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes; and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. And chap. xxxix. verse 29. Neither will I bide my face any more from them: for I have poured out my spirit upon the house of Israel, saith the Lord God.*

And *Zechariah* agrees with both the foregoing Prophets, chap. xii. verse 10. *And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications; and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.*

It is obvious to make these following observations upon those oracles.

1. That the Messiah was to be raised above the reach of any of his enemies.
2. That he was to ascend to heaven, and to be instated there in glory, in order to his being dignified and glorified above all nations.
3. That he was from thence to send down prophetic graces plentifully, which made his entrance into heaven a kind of triumph.
4. That this great event was to precede the destruction of *Jerusalem*, to which the Prophet *Joel* in the fore-cited place seems to allude. The Messiah was to form a new society, which was to be regulated, not by the laws given on mount *Sinai*, but by those which were to be published from mount *Zion*.

C H A P. XXIII.

That the GENTILES in the Time of the MESSIAH were to be called to the Knowledge of the true God.

THIS article being one of the most important and most visible characters of the times of the Messiah, and also the great effect of his ministry, we see that God had a particular care to divulge the same by a multitude of prophetic representations of it.

For not only had he declared that the *seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head* (1); that is, the works of the Devil. And we cannot deny, but that the errors and idolatries of the *Gentiles*, and their vices which arise from thence, were the fruits of sin, which this unhappy spirit brought into the world. It was not only foretold that God would *persuade Japhet to dwell in the tents of Sem* (m), by uniting the posterities of both those Patriarchs in one and the same religion. Not only had he signified that the Messiah should reign over the children of *Seth*, that is, over all the posterity of *Noah*, the offspring of *Cham* not excepted; not only had he foretold that all nations, kindreds, and families, should be blessed in the Messiah (n).

But God went much farther afterwards; for, as the light of the revelation increased, so the same was declared more distinctly. For,

1. The Patriarch *Jacob* tells that the Messiah should be the desire and expectation of all nations. *Gen. xlix. verse 10. The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be.*

2. *Moses* threatens the *Jews*, that if they despised the law of God, strangers, that is, *Gentiles*, should be preferred before them. *Deut. xxviii. verse 43. The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low.* The same Prophet menaceth them from God, that he would stir up their jealousy, by calling

(1) *Gen. iii. 15.*

(m) *Gen. ix. 27.*

(n) *Gen. xii. & Ch. xviii. & xxii.*

a foolish people to his service and worship. *Deut. xxxii. verse 21. They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God, they have provoked me to anger with their vanities; and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people, I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation.* Nothing can be said more express and particular than these last words of that great lawgiver and founder of the state of the Jews.

3. *David sets forth the empire of the Messiah, as that which was to reach over all the earth. Psalm ii. verse 8. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. And Psalm xxii. vers. 27, 28, 29, 30. All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord; and all the kingdoms of the nations shall worship before thee. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is Governor amongst the nations. All they that be sat upon the earth, shall eat and worship; all they that go down to the dust, shall bow before him. A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the Lord for a generation. Psalm lxxii. vers. 8, 9, 10, 11. He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him; and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents, the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before him, all nations shall serve him. Which prophecy is the more remarkable, because the promise made to Abraham is there repeated in so many words, viz. That all nations of the earth should be blessed in the Messiah. Psalm cii. verse 15. So the heathen shall fear the name of the Lord, and all the kings of the earth thy glory. And Psalm cx. verse 2. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.* One ought to transcribe almost the whole book of *Psalms*, to take notice of all the passages which are to this purpose.

The Prophet *Hosea* declares in general terms, That it was not an impossible thing for those who had been God's people, to cease to be so; or for those that were not his people, to become his people; chap. i. verse 10. *Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered; and it shall come to pass, that in the place where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there it shall be said unto them, Ye are the sons of the living God.*

Isaiah mentions this so often, and in such an emphatical manner, that it seems to be the main thing he drives at in all his writings. Chap. ii. vers. 2, 3. he speaks thus: *And it shall come to pass in the last days that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths; for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And chap. xi. verse 10. In that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people, to it shall the Gentiles seek. And, chap. xviii. verse 7, he makes a manifest allusion to the expectation of all nations. In chap. xlii. verse 1, 2, 3, 4. he repeats the same thing: Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I will put my spirit upon him, he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not cry, nor lift up, nor cause his voice to be heard in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the*

Smoking flax shall he not quench: he shall bring forth judgment unto the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law. Chap. iv. vers. 4, 5. *Behold, I have given thee for a witness of the people, a leader and a commander to the people. Behold, thou shalt call a nation that thou knowest not, and nations that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel, for he hath glorified thee.* But one sees these truths in their greatest lustre in the lxth chap. of his prophecies, vers. 3, 4, 5. *The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all that gather themselves together, they come to thee; thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see and shine, and thine heart shall fear and be enlarged, because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.* And chap. lxii. verse 2. *The Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and all kings thy glory: and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name.* And vers. 11 and 12. *Behold, the Lord hath proclaimed unto the ends of the world, Say ye to the daughter of Zion, Behold, thy salvation cometh: behold, his reward is with him, and his work is before him. And they shall call them the holy people, the redeemed of the Lord.* And thou shalt be called *Sought out, A City not forsaken.* And chap. lxxv. verse 1. *I am sought of them that asked not for me; I am found of them that sought me not: I said, Behold me, behold me, unto a nation that was not called by my name.* And chap. lxxvi. verse 18. *It shall come to pass, that I will gather all nations and tongues, and they shall come and see my glory.*

Amos (who was contemporary with *Isaiah*) speaks the same thing, chap. ix. vers. 11, 12. *In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David which is fallen, and close up the branches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it, as in the days of old. That they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by my name, saith the Lord which doth this.*

The Prophet *Micah* also follows the Prophet *Isaiah* step by step, *Micah* iv. vers. 1, 2, 3. *But in the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills, and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*

Zephaniah is as clear as any of the rest, chap. ii. verse 11. *They shall worship him, every one from his place, even all the isles of the heathen.* And chap. 3, vers. 9, 10. *Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent. From beyond the rivers of Ethiopia, my suppliants, the daughter of my dispersed, shall bring mine offering.*

Jeremiah, in the fourth chapter of his prophecies, verse 2. confirms the same truth; as likewise chap. xvi. verse 19. and more expressly chap. xxxi. verse 34. *And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every*

every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord.

After the return of the captivity, we find that the Prophets still pursued the same ideas. *Haggai ii. vers. 7, 8.* And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come: and I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. The silver is mine, and the gold is mine, saith the Lord of Hosts.

Zechariah speaks in like manner, chap. ii. vers. 10, 11. Sing and rejoice, O daughter of Zion; for lo, I come, and I will dwell in the midst of thee, saith the Lord. And many nations shall be joined to the Lord in that day, and shall be my people; and I will dwell in the midst of thee, and thou shalt know that the Lord of Hosts hath sent me unto thee. And chap. viii. vers. 20, 21, 22. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, It shall yet come to pass, that there shall come people, and the inhabitants of many cities: and the inhabitants of one city shall go to another, saying, Let us go speedily to pray before the Lord, and to seek the Lord of Hosts: I will go also. Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of Hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. And chap. ix. ver. 10. he expresses the same thing more distinctly. And I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim, and the horse from Jerusalem, and the battle-bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen; and his dominion shall be from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.

Malachi speaks to the same purpose with the greatest clearness imaginable, chap. i. vers. 10, 11. Who is there among you that shuts the doors, or kindles fire on mine altar for nought? I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand: for from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts.

On all which passages one may make these observations:

1. That all this whole series of ideas hath as much connexion to one another, as the words of those oracles have which we have now alleged.

2. That these Prophets have set it forth with all its possible characters, by the original of these people, calling them the children of *Seth*, by their countries, *Egypt*, *Affyria*, the *East* and *West*; by their idolatry, by their aversion to the *Jews*, their ignorance, &c.

3. That these prophecies were generally understood by the *Jews* of old, of the calling of the *Gentiles*, as appears from the use the Apostles made of them when they preached to the *Gentiles*.

4. That forasmuch as God had ordered proselytes to be received into the Jewish communion, he seemed thereby to have hinted to them, that what he had enjoined them as to particulars, ought with much more reason to be practised in general to all the nations of the world, and ought also to be universally desired.

5. That the modern *Jews* themselves constantly believed, that the Messiah should lead the *Gentiles* to repentance. So *Kimchi*, *Moses*, *Maimonides*, and many other authors, since the *Talmudists*.

6. That the opinion which the *Jews* have entertained, that the Mes-

siah, as a great conqueror, was to subdue the nations, proceeds only from the sense of the oppression they have been, and still are, under, which makes them so earnestly desire a temporal deliverance from the power of the *Gentiles*, by means of the Messiah: and the pompous expressions of some of the Prophets have strengthened this belief in them; though they cannot deny but that the same prophetical passages do imply that the Messiah was to subject the *Gentiles* by the way of instruction.

C H A P. XXIV.

That the JEWS were to be rejected in the Time of the MESSIAH.

THERE are three things which make this particular very considerable.

The first is, That it seems altogether opposite to the design of God, who was entered into covenant with the *Jews*, excluding all other nations of the earth.

The second is, That nothing ever was a greater scandal to the *Jews* than the thoughts of a possibility that God should ever cast off their nation.

The third is, That the rejection of the *Jews* seemed less possible in the time of the Messiah, than at any other time; the Messiah being, according to their persuasion, to procure the salvation of the *Jews* in the first place, and before other nations were made partakers of those blessings which he brought along with him.

And it was upon this account that God hath forgot nothing which might make those oracles that relate to the rejection of the *Jews*, in the time of the Messiah, very sensible.

The chief privileges which made the *Jews* consider themselves as God's peculiar people, were these.

1. God himself was in a peculiar manner their king and Sovereign; which gave *Josephus* occasion to call their state a theocracy.
2. Their religious service did wholly depend upon God, who had instituted their order of priesthood.
3. God had placed them in a country by themselves, and separated them from all other nations.
4. God had given them the *Urim* and *Thummim*, which gave them an infallible resolution in all important cases happening to their state; which was an evident mark of the Divine presence and direction.
5. God gave them particular marks of his blessing, the extraordinary fruitfulness which continually ushered in their sabbatical year; the security which they enjoyed during their three solemn feasts; and above all, the deliverers which he from time to time raised up for them, their fourteen judges and kings.

And

And God also threatened them with evils opposite to these blessings; and all this is denounced against them step by step.

1. He declares that he would no longer be their God.
2. That he would abolish and reject their order of priesthood, which was accordingly executed by degrees.
3. That he would turn them out of their own country, without recovery.
4. That they should have no more Prophets or revelations.
5. That he would take away from them all the marks of his protection. The passages expressing these several particulars are here subjoined, which may be easily ranged under the foregoing heads, that we may understand the better that God hath plainly foretold the rejection of the Jews at the time of the Messiah.

1. *Moses* then threatens them with a terrible desolation, *Deut. xxviii.* vers. 28, 29. *The Lord shall smite thee with madness and blindness, and astonishment of heart: and thou shalt grope at noon day, as the blind gropeth in darkness, and thou shalt not prosper in thy ways, and thou shalt be only oppressed and spoiled evermore, and no man shall save thee.*

Manasseh acknowledges that God in this passage foretels, not only their first desolation under *Nebuchadnezzar*, but also that which happened under *Titus Vespasian*; the eagle mentioned at the 49th verse of that chapter, being not only applicable to *Nebuchadnezzar*, whom *Ezekiel*, chap. xvii. represents under that notion, but more particularly to the Roman emperor *Titus*, whose eagles gave a literal accomplishment to that prophecy.

This makes it evident, that at the same time when God threatens them with their first desolation, he also denounces to them the last; and that consequently we may apply those passages to the second rejection of the Jews, which were spoken of the first.

2. *Hosea* expresseth the same in his first, second, and third chapters, where he particularly foretels their being deprived of the royal dignity, priesthood, and prophecy.

3. *Isaiah* speaks to the same purpose in his first, second, and fifth chapters; as also chap. xxviii, lxii, l, and lxvi. and in his xxvth chapter he speaks as if no restoration was to be expected.

4. *Amos* represents the same thing, chap. v. vers. 16, 17, and 21, 22. *Therefore the Lord, the God of Hosts, the Lord saith thus: Wailing shall be in all streets; and they shall say in all the high-ways, Alas! alas! and they shall call the husbandman to mourning, and such as are skilful of lamentation to wailing. And in all vineyards shall be wailing; for I will pass through thee, saith the Lord. I hate, I despise your feast-days; and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies: though ye offer me burnt-offerings and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them, neither will I regard the peace-offering of your fat beasts.* Where he hints that their desolation shall be without recovery.

5. *Jeremiah* is very express in chap. v, vi, and x. verse 11. where he declares that their destruction should be without remedy; as also chap. xii. and xxxi.

6. *Daniel* follows their steps, chap. ix. vers. 25, 26, 27. where he directly points at the destruction of *Jerusalem* and the temple. The words are these: *Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth*

of

of the commandment, to restore and build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks; and threescore and two weeks the streets shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after the threescore and two weeks shall MESSIAH be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the Prince that shall come, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood; and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. It is worth our observing, that Josephus (o) the historian, a little after the destruction of Jerusalem, acknowledges that this prophecy of Daniel did expressly foretel the ruin of the temple of Jerusalem, and of the Jewish government, by the arms of the Roman empire, which himself was an eye-witness of.

7. Zechariah speaks after the same manner, chap. xi. vers. 9. Then said I, I will not feed you: that that dieth, let it die; and that that is to be cut off, let it be cut off; and let the rest eat, every one the flesh of another.

8. And Malachi follows these common ideas, chap. i. vers. 10 and 11. Who is there among you that shuts the doors for nought? Neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of Hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. For from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the Lord of Hosts.

I cannot conceive how any that consider the succession of these ideas, so interwoven one with another, can have the least doubt whether the Jews were to be rejected at the coming of the Messiah, or no; especially since the Apostles, and St. Paul in particular, have made it appear, that the Prophets so plainly did foretel this truth.

CH A P. XXV.

Of the Time which succeeded the Publishing of these Prophecies, till the Coming of the MESSIAH.

THUS we have seen an abridgment of the most remarkable oracles uttered, either by God himself, or by Prophets, whom he made use of to declare his designs. I might easily have alledged a far greater number; but I chose rather to content myself with these, to avoid the confusion which the multiplicity of citations is apt to occasion. And I question not but these I have mentioned, will suffice to give us an idea of God's promise concerning the Messiah sufficiently great, and enable us to make a judgment, whether that which the Christians declare to have been the accomplishment of it, be so indeed.

In the mean time, for the further clearing of this matter, I desire the reader to make some reflexions on the whole matter, which seem to me to deserve a serious attention.

The

The first is, That God hath by degrees put an end to those divisions that were between some other nations and the *Jews*, founded on their hopes of the promise of the Messiah, as the time of its accomplishment drew near.

We hear little now of the enmity of the *Ishmaelites* against the *Jews*: God having placed them in the desert of *Paran*, they have indeed continued there in a manner invincible, but also without any great communication with their neighbour nations.

As for the *Moabites* and *Ammonites*, they had their kingdoms on the borders of the Holy Land, and continued there till the time of *Nebuchadnezzar*, since which we find little mention made of them, as being in a manner wholly confounded with other nations; only we meet with some few memorials of the *Ammonites*, whose pretensions to that promise were the weaker of the two, as being the posterity of *Lot's* younger daughter.

It is worth our observing, That most of the prophecies of *David*, as well as of the following Prophets, which thunder forth such terrible denunciations against the pride of those people, threatening them with the curse of God and final destruction, seem to have an eye to the old quarrel and jealousy; their state quarrel which happened afterwards, succeeding to this their first aversion, and hatred of the *Jews*.

The state and government of the *Edomites*, as well as their jealousy against *Israel*, continued till after *Cyrus*, who granted them the liberty of returning to their own country, as well as to the *Jews* who had been carried away captives with them by *Nebuchadnezzar*; but contrary to the hope they had of being re-established to their former estate, we find, that according to the prophecy of *Malachi*, they continued in bondage to their neighbours, yea to the *Jews* themselves, until *Herod the Edomite*, possessing himself of the throne of *Judea*, was probably flattered by those of his own nation, and by some *Jews* also, into a belief of his being the promised Messiah.

We must also take notice, That the Divine Providence seems to have continued this people so long, on purpose that the spirit of jealousy which was between them and the *Jews*, might preserve the notion of the promised Messiah more fresh and lively, and to engage men to a more attentive consideration of the prophecies concerning the same; and that God, by confounding them afterwards with other nations, intended wholly to take away their pretensions; the service which before they rendered to the *Jewish* church, being no longer needful, after so clear and distinct a revelation.

This reflexion will be owned to be more than a conjecture, if we consider God's dealing with the ten tribes: God suffers them to be carried away captives by *Salmanassar*, leaving only the tribes of *Judah*, *Levi*, and *Benjamin*, to be afterwards the depositaries of the Divine oracles.

The second is, That as it appears that God hath kept some distance of time in his revelation, that the authority of the Prophets might be fully and firmly established, which, as I have observed, was done by the accomplishment of some prophecies, respecting some particular matters of fact near at hand; so it pleased God, for above four hundred years, to leave the *Jews* without the light of prophecy; because that which he had

had given them till *Malachi's* time, was sufficient to make them know the Messiah, when he should appear in the world.

The third is, That this cessation of the gifts of prophecy among the *Jews* did serve to increase their desires for the coming of the Messiah, in whose days those gifts (which were the peculiar glory of their nation) were to be restored in far greater abundance than had ever been granted to them before.

A fourth reflexion, which is well worth our attentive consideration, is, That God so ordered it in his providence, that all the books of the *Old Testament* were translated into the *Greek* about one hundred years after *Malachi*, that they might be communicated to all nations; the *Greek* tongue being at that time, and indeed ever since the reign of *Alexander* the Great, a language the most known and generally spoken in the world, he having with his power carried it into the *South and East*.

It is natural to conceive, that the Divine Providence hereby designed these three things:

First, To establish and confirm the authority of those Divine oracles, by delivering them into the hands of the heathen, by the public authority of the *Jewish* nation, at the desire of a king of *Egypt*.

Secondly, To prevent cavilling about the explication of those oracles. Thus, for instance, we see there is no place left to dispute the translation of that prophecy, *Behold, a virgin shall conceive*, seeing the *LXX* interpreters, who were *Jews*, have rendered it so themselves, some ages before any contests were started about it between the *Jews* and *Christians*.

The third was, To prepare and dispose the heathen for receiving the religion of the Messiah.

And indeed we may easily comprehend, 1. That it was necessary that the prophetic writings should be communicated to the heathen, in order to their ready submitting themselves to the authority of the Messiah, whom they knew by those characters which had been given of him. 2. That it was not fitting that the heathen should wholly depend on the authority of the *Jews*, forasmuch as the same Divine oracles do expressly affirm, that the Messiah was to be rejected by the greatest part of them.

I shall conclude these reflexions with a short view of the state of the commonwealth and religion of the *Jews*, since the last of the Prophets.

First, One finds that this government subsisted as distinct from all other nations of the earth, as ever it did before: we see the honour wherewith *Alexander* the Great treated their high-priest; and that, when he was appointed arbitrator of the difference between them and the *Samaritans*, he determined the matter in favour of the *Jews*.

One sees that *Alexander* preserved them in the enjoyment of their rights and liberties, as they enjoyed them under the kings of *Persia*; and in particular exempted them from paying any tribute every seventh year, because then they did not sow their ground, and consequently could not reap.

And if we find that *Ptolemy* took *Jerusalem* on a sabbath day, the *Jews* making conscience of defending themselves, because the law required their ceasing from all work; from whence *Agatharcides*, an heathen author, takes occasion to blame their law; if we find him carrying a great number

number of *Jews* with him into *Egypt*, yet withal we find him treating them with as much kindness as the *Macedonians* themselves, appointing distinct places in *Egypt* and *Lybia* for their habitation.

If we find that powerful princes, such as *Antiochus*, *Epiphanes*, and some others of his successors, broke the power of the *Jews*, profaned their temple, and forced great numbers of them to abjure their religion; yet we see them also at the same time giving the highest instances of an immovable constancy and courage in defence of their law, and in enduring the most exquisite tortures; we see others of them encouraged with the love of their country, as well as religion, putting themselves into a posture of defence, purifying the temple, and celebrating a festival which is observed even at this day, and lastly obtaining favourable treaties at the hands of their enemies; as may be seen in the books of the *Maccabees*, and in the twelfth book of *Josephus's Antiquities*: yea, we find their name and glory at that time spread as far as *Lacedæmon*, with which commonwealth they made an alliance during the high-priesthood of *Onias*.

One sees them after this so considerable, under the successor of *Antiochus* their persecutor, that even those kings sue for their alliance with great presents.

One sees that *Ptolemy Philometor* granted to *Onias* the son, leave to build a temple in *Egypt*, for the convenience of those *Jews* whom *Ptolemy* the son of *Lagus* had carried thither, as well as for those who left their country for the oppression of the *Seleucids*; for *Judea*, being situate between *Syria* and *Egypt*, was ordinarily the theatre of war between those two states. It is here worth our noting, that the *Jews* undertook the building of the temple in *Egypt*, as thinking themselves authorised by that prophecy, *Isai.* xix. 24. it being a thing otherwise forbid by the law.

One sees, in the same prince's reign, a great contest between the *Samaritans* and the *Jews*, about the pre-eminence of their temples, at *Jerusalem* and mount *Garizim*, decided by him in favour of the *Jews*: on which occasion the *Jews* shewed that prince their law, and acquainted him with the series of their history, to confute the *Samaritans* pretensions.

One sees after this, when the *Jews* had conferred the sovereignty and high-priesthood on *Simon*, that their state became so powerful, that under *Hyrchanus* his successor they were in a condition to attack their enemies in *Syria*, and compel the *Edomites* to admit circumcision. *Aristobulus* his son was crowned; his brother succeeded him in the royal dignity, and left the state in a flourishing condition, notwithstanding the civil and foreign wars he was engaged in.

We find afterwards, that the intestine divisions among the successors of those *Jewish* princes did by degrees open a gap for foreign power to enter, and prevail over them: *Pompey*, siding with *Hyrchanus*, took *Jerusalem*, and made the *Jews* tributary to the *Romans*, but without changing any thing in their religion.

Julius Cæsar a while after bestowed the kingdom of *Judea* upon *Herod* the *Edomite*. *Augustus* after him used the *Jews* with the same equity as *Pompey* before him had done, as appears from one of his declarations published

published in favour of the *Jews* of *Egypt* and *Assa*, recorded by *Josephus*. This *Herod* and *Augustus* are the same under whom our Saviour *Jesus* Christ was born.

It is evident, therefore, That the state of the *Jews* has continued distinct from other nations, and sufficiently known, from the time of the Prophet *Malachi* until *Herod*.

We may also truly assert, That whatever inclination the *Jews* of old had for the idolatries of their neighbours, yet we do not find them given that way during this interval, between the last of their Prophets and *Herod*; as if the charge and command of that Prophet *Malachi* had always sounded in their ears, *Mal. iv. verse 4. Remember the law of Moses my servant, &c.*

One sees that the *Jews* under the *Maccabees*, in great numbers, suffered martyrdom, rather than abjure their religion; and that they observed the ceremonial law with all carefulness, of which *Augustus* himself was witness.

One sees that, under strangers and heathen kings, they exempted themselves from answering any suit at law on the sabbath-day, from paying tribute the seventh year, and preserving the rights and privileges of their temple in spite of all opposition. Lastly, one finds them, during *Herod's* government, supported by the favour of the *Roman* empire, in refusing to set up the emperor's trophies, for fear lest some images might be hid under them, which they looked upon as a crime against their law.

I am not ignorant, that since *Malachi* some heresies sprung up among the *Jews*, their commerce with the *Greeks* (who applied themselves to philosophical speculations) having contributed to make them much more disputatious than they were before. The authority likewise of their kings, who were high-priests also, may have had a great stroke in blemishing the purity of their religion.

But yet the disputes which we find amongst them, as that of the fatality of events, did not at all touch the substance of their religion.

They no sooner found the spirit of epicurism to creep in amongst them, but they framed such additions to their public liturgy, as they thought most proper to eradicate, or at least condemn that corruption.

I confess also, that the Pharisees and Doctors of their law had greatly altered their morality, in making their own explications (by the great authority which they had amongst the people) to pass for authentic: but yet this change and corruption in their morals as to practice, did not go so far as to abolish the laws themselves, which were only wrested from their true meaning. This was indeed a great corruption, but not such a one as could make it to be no more the same religion.

So that we may boldly assert (which is a thing very important to our present purpose) That the state and religion of the *Jews* have continued sufficiently entire till the time of the appearing of the Messiah in the world, for their preserving of whatsoever was necessary, viz. as well the books of the Old Testament, as the knowledge of those oracles which foretold the coming of the Messiah, together with the knowledge of these principles, according to which the Prophets have spoken in their predictions concerning him.

THE P R E F A C E.

I HAVE shewn in my Reflexions upon the Book of *Genesis*, that the facts of the Creation, and the promises of the Messiah, are truths not to be questioned, and that the ideas of this Messiah continued vigorously all the time that preceded the children of *Israel's* going out of *Egypt*.

We have seen afterwards, in the Remarks which I have made upon the Laws which God gave to *Moses*, that it was the great design of God to keep men in the expectation of this Messiah, and to take care that they might certainly know him whenever he should appear in the world.

I have taken notice, in the third part of these Reflexions, of the care which God took to give a great number of Oracles to explain particularly all the characters of this Messiah, the place and manner of his Birth, the principal circumstances of his Life, Death, and Resurrection, and to foretel the effusion of the gifts of the Holy Ghost upon the *Gentiles*, their call to the Religion of the Messiah, and lastly, the overthrow of the whole model of the *Jewish* religion and commonwealth, which was no longer of any use after the coming of the Messiah, and the calling of the *Gentiles*.

My present business is now to shew, That in the books of the *New Testament* we may find an exact accomplishment of this whole design, wherein God had with so much care instructed the world so long before; and there is nothing more easy, if we will but take a little pains to read these books attentively, and to compare them with the model which God himself made, as we have hitherto described it.

To make this truth yet more evident, I think it will be necessary to do two or three things, which seem to be very important for my present design.

And first, I am to observe, that there appears a most perfect coherence between the ideas of the *Old Testament* and those of the *New*; which is absolutely necessary, to shew that there is in these books a perfect unity of design, notwithstanding the vast difference there is between the *Jews* who preserve the *Old Testament*, and the *Christians* who preserve the *New*.

Secondly, I am to demonstrate that the ideas of the Messiah were very strong in the minds of the *Jews* at the very time that *Jesus Christ* appeared in the world.

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This was absolutely necessary, that they might not have wherewith to accuse those who received Christ for the Messiah, of being deceived in their choice, for not having had the exact ideas of the Messiah which God had promised.

I shall upon this account shew in the third place, That when Jesus Christ did appear in the world, the model which God had framed in the law of *Moses*, whereby the Messiah might be plainly known, did then subsist in the manner wherein God had framed it.

After this, I shall endeavour to shew by proofs, which are indeed unquestionable, That in examining all the characters which the Prophets gave, by which the Messiah might be known, we cannot conceive a more exact execution of God's design, as to the Messiah, than that which we find in the person of Jesus Christ, whereof the books of the *New Testament* have given us the history.

Lastly, I shall shew clearly that this model which God had framed in giving the law, and in forming the commonwealth and religion of the *Jews* in so proper a manner, to make the Messiah certainly known, is not in being at this day; but that it was so destroyed by the total dispersion of that people, that we should not be able to know the Messiah if he should now appear again in the world: and that indeed the principal events, which according to the oracles were to follow the coming of the Messiah, are already come to pass in part, and do still come to pass every day.

I hope to evince these truths beyond all contest: indeed the bare reading of the books of the *New Testament* plainly discovers the coherence which they have with the books of the *Old*; it shews clearly that the ideas of the Messiah were at that time very strong in the minds of the *Jews*; and it supposeth, without any affectation, that the model which God had made so necessary to distinguish the Messiah, stood at that time entire.

In particular, it is certain, that the four Evangelists, by the relation of unquestionable matters of fact, have proved that Jesus, the son of *Mary*, is the Messiah which God had promised.

St. Luke shews, in the *Acts of the Apostles*, that after the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the effusion of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, the Gospel was preached to the heathens.

The epistles are a natural consequence of this vocation of the heathens, and of the abolishing of the law of *Moses*, which the Apostles had undertaken. They unanimously conspire to shew that God had resolved to call the heathens to partake of salvation, that the *Jews* for the greatest part should be justly deprived thereof, because they obstinately rejected the Messiah. Several questions are examined, which arose either from the calling of the Gentiles, or from the abolishing of the ceremonial worship.

The succession of the history of the Christian church justifies, That after the destruction of *Jerusalem* all people embraced the religion of Jesus Christ, in receiving him for the Messiah whom God had promised to the Patriarchs and to the *Jews*.

I shall resume all these articles one by one, in that natural order in which I have proposed them.

REFLEXIONS

REFLEXIONS

UPON THE

BOOKS

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT,

TO

ESTABLISH THE TRUTH

OF THE

CHRISTIAN RELIGION.

CHAP. I.

That there appears a very just Connexion between the Ideas of the OLD TESTAMENT, and those of the NEW, the latter borrowing Light from the former.

AS it is not much the character of romances, even then when they are most tied up to the rules of probability, to borrow either the style or ideas of those authors from whom they take their subject, so I suppose that, in this my undertaking to shew that the *New Testament* is an exact accomplishment of the *Old*, it is very important to make out, that at the first reading of the Gospels and Apostolical writings, one

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finds

finds in them a perfect conformity of ideas with the writings of the *Old Testament*.

One may to this purpose observe in general, that the Gospel supposeth the Divine authority of the book of the *Old Testament*, as an unquestionable truth. The gospels and epistles have the same coherence with the books of the law and Prophets which the writings of the latter Prophets have with those of the former, and which the books of all the Prophets together have with the books of *Moses*, and with the prophecies, laws, and histories, which are contained therein.

One may take notice afterwards, that all the books of the *New Testament* have an essential relation to those of the *Old*, in their most principal designs. I have shewed that their design was no other, than to raise men to expectations of the Messiah, and to paint him to the life whom God had promised from the beginning of the world; and the only design of the *New Testament* is, to prove that the Messiah is come according to the Prophets. The first speaks concerning the Messiah as expected; the latter, as already come.

But we must proceed to a more particular view of this matter. I say then, first of all, that the Christians have the same object of their faith which the *Jews* had; this Jesus Christ himself declares, where he saith, *This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent*. Behold here the true character of the Christian religion, as well as of the Jewish, to believe one only God, to own a Messiah, and to acknowledge that Jesus Christ is he. The *Jews* agree with us in the former articles, though they dispute the last.

I say, in the second place, that the laws of the Gospel, which regulate religion and the conduct of particular persons in that society, are exactly the same with those of the *Old Testament*. Jesus Christ, in his sermon upon the mount, which contains an abridgment of his ethics, had no other end but to restore the true sense and meaning of those laws God had given upon mount *Sinai*; and though, in the matter of divorces, it seems opposite to that law wherein God had before permitted them, yet we may easily conceive that he began to abrogate those orders and dispensations which were only given to make the Messiah known when-ever he should appear.

The prayer which Jesus Christ taught his Apostles, is full of notions which reigned among the *Jews*, as several expositors have manifested. I shall content myself with alledging the instance of the petition for our daily bread, which has an evident regard to the manna which God gave the children of *Israel* in the wilderness for forty years.

We know also that the sacraments of the baptism and the eucharist are originally Jewish ceremonies, which Jesus Christ hath applied, with a very little variation, to much more important subjects. Baptism was a washing which accompanied the sacrifices and circumcision of proselytes; and the washing practised under the law of *Moses*, signified that the proselyte who was admitted to the same, was resolved to renounce his former curses, and for the time to come to follow an opposite way of living, according to the rules prescribed him by the Ministers of Heaven, after that they, in the name of God, had assured him of the remission of his sins.

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The eucharist was an appendix of the feast of the passover, which preserved the memory of the sufferings of the *Israelites* in *Egypt*, and the deliverance he afforded them, in punishing of the *Egyptians*. This ceremony did perpetuate the memory of the deliverance till the coming of the *Messiah*. *Jesus Christ* had substituted to this figure an instance of the curse of God against the posterity of *Cham*, the idea of his death, by which he had communicated his blessing to all nations of the earth according to his promise; and he hath made it a more full and exact memorial of his death, which he would have us to consider as the death of the true *Lamb*, which takes away the sin of the world. As the old covenant was made in the blood of a lamb, so *Jesus Christ*, with regard to the New Testament or covenant promised by *Jeremiah*, chap. xxxi. ordains the celebrating the memorial of the blood he had spilt, *This is the New Testament in my blood, &c.* And lastly, whereas the law ordained the commemoration of the paschal lamb but once a year, *Jesus Christ* seems to appoint a much more frequent celebration of the eucharist, when he saith, *As oft as ye shall eat this bread, &c.* the reason of which, without doubt, is taken from the greatness of the benefit which his death confers upon us.

It is well worth our observation, that ordinarily the same prophetic ideas that are found in the *Old Testament* may be met with in the *New*. The book of the *Revelations* contains abundance of particulars set down in the prophecies of *Zechariah* and *Ezekiel*. *Jesus Christ* himself pursues the ideas of the Prophet *Joel* in the xxivth of *Matthew*, when he sets forth the destruction of *Jerusalem*; and afterwards he describes the same, according to the notions which *Daniel* gives us thereof.

Daniel foretels, in the viith chapter of his book, the destruction of the *Roman* monarchy by the Christians, whom he styles *The People of the Most High*. *St. Paul* follows the same notion, 1 *Cor.* vi. 2. where he supposeth it as a known thing: *The Saints* (saith he) *shall judge the world*. And *St. John*, in the xxth of the *Revelations*, verse 4, represents *Satan* bound, and the government put into the hands of believers.

It is also very remarkable, that the promises and threats of *Jesus Christ* are expressed in terms borrowed from the *Old Testament*. These words of *Jesus Christ*, *He that bears my words, and believes in him that sent me, hath eternal life, and shall not come into judgment, &c.* have not they a plain relation to *Adam's* unbelief and disobedience, to the judgment he underwent, and the punishment imposed on him? Is it not from this spirit, which penetrates both, that the *New Testament* so oft makes mention of a new *Canaan*, a new *Jerusalem*, a new name, &c. and that glory is represented to us sometimes under the notion of *Paradise*, sometimes of a feast, where *Abraham* (who is called *The Father of the Faithful*) sits at the upper end?

Eternal damnation is represented to us under the notion of the valley of *Hinnom*, of a lake burning with fire and brimstone, with regard to the lake of *Sodom*, and to the place where the filth of *Jerusalem* was not to be burnt up and consumed. It is upon this account that believers are exhorted to remember *Lot's wife*, *Luke* ix. 62. and xvii. 32. and to depart from the midst of the wicked, *Hebr.* xiii.

If we consider the election of the Apostles, and of the seventy Disciples, we shall find the reference they have to the heads of the twelve tribes, and to the seventy elders whom *Moses* chose, to preserve the memory of the seventy souls *Jacob* brought with him into *Egypt*. Those passages, *Ye shall sit on twelve thrones, and your names are written in the book of life*, and the number of 144000, being the product of 12 times 12, by allusion to the twelve tribes, do all borrow their light from those ancient histories.

Throughout the *New Testament* we find nothing but a continual allusion to the state of the *Jews*: all those ideas of the *liberty of the sons of God* do allude to the ceremony of their jubilee. The *first born* mentioned there, and the *kingdom of Priests*, are not to be understood but by casting our eye on the *Old Testament*. If *Jesus Christ* be called the *chief Corner Stone*, if *Peter* be called a *Stone or Rock*, Believers *living Stones*, and the Apostles *Foundations*, it is by way of allusion to the manner in which the twelve princes or heads of the tribes did contribute towards the building of the temple, and to the manner of the building of it. If the children of *Zebedee* are called *Boanerges*, it is with reference to the second of *Haggai*, *Yet once, and I will shake the heavens and the earth*. That the Heathens are described as a people *afar off*, and what is spoken concerning the wall of partition, hath a visible respect to the *Gentiles* being prohibited to enter into the holy place of the temple.

If I would instance in all the mystical relations of the one volume to the other, I might say that there appears a singular conformity between them, even in those things which seem most opposite. *Moses*, the first and great minister of the law, had a stammering speech; *Zachary*, the father of *St. John the Baptist*, was struck dumb, when he was to pronounce the solemn blessing of the people; whereas *Jesus Christ*, on the contrary, hath this character given of him, that *never man spake like him*. God said at the beginning, *Increase and multiply*; he repeats the same to *Noah*, in order to the propagation of mankind, and replenishing the earth. *Jesus Christ* saith, *Go and teach all nations*; and the word is constantly represented to us as the seed of the regeneration and baptism, as the laver or washing whereby we acquire a new birth. We see *Noah* receiving the dove into the ark with an olive branch, as a sign of the peace of Heaven; and *Jesus Christ* receives a like token.

Fire falls down from heaven on the sacrifice of *Abel*, *Noah*, *Moses*, *David*, *Solomon*, and *Elijah*, as a token that God accepted their offerings; and God sends the same mark of his favour on the day of *Pentecost*, to declare that the sacrifice of *Jesus Christ* was most acceptable to him.

God had forbid the high priest to rend his clothes on any occasion whatsoever, that rending of garments involving a mystery, as appears from the history of *Jeroboam*; and yet we see, that the high priest rent his clothes at the condemnation of our Saviour, and thereby violated for ever the authority of his priesthood: whereas, on the contrary, we find the garments of our Lord and Saviour were left whole and entire, to signify to us the eternity of his priesthood. We see that the ear of *Malchus*, the high priest's servant, was cut off by *St. Peter*, and that *Jesus Christ* restored it again, to shew that the synagogue had lost the true faith, and *Jesus Christ* alone was able to restore it. We see the holy place in the temple

temple opened at the death of Christ, by the rending of the vail; which signified that the ceremonial law was then to lose its force and authority.

But the observations already made are sufficient to make out what I intend, without having recourse to these mysteries; and I believe no man can make such reflexions, without being persuaded that so great a conformity of ideas must necessarily imply a perfect unity of design: now it is impossible to suppose that this unity of design should be so constantly observed by different authors, who lived at such a distance of times, places, and interests, without being convinced of a perpetual Divine guidance.

I acknowledge that in the *New Testament* there may be found some decisions which seem wholly opposite to those of the *Old*: for instance, we find there a total abrogation of the ceremonial law; but, forasmuch as all those observations had no other use but to distinguish the *Jews* from all other nations of the earth, and by this means to make the Messiah known to the *Jews*, amongst whom he was to be born, so it is obvious to conceive that all those ceremonies were of course to be abolished after that the Messiah was come into the world, and that, if we consider things in this view, we shall find no contradiction at all between *Moses*, who established these ceremonies, and the Apostles, who abolished them.

But, before we come to confirm these grounds, we must make it appear, that the ideas of the Messiah continued very fresh in the minds of the *Jews*; and this shall be the subject of the following chapter.

C H A P. II.

That the Ideas of the Messiah continued very fresh in the Minds of the Jews at the Time of the Coming of our Saviour JESUS CHRIST.

IT would be an easy matter for me here to shew that the ideas of the Messiah were lively in the minds of the *Jews* before the coming of Jesus Christ. This appears from the fable which the Rabbies told *Origen*, concerning *Zedechiah*, and *Abiab*, whom the king of *Babylon* burnt, for persuading the *Jewish* women that they were the persons that were to conceive the Messiah. But I intend to make use of proofs of a different nature.

Now, to prove that the notion of the Messiah was very fresh in the minds of the *Jews*, we need only take notice, that the promise of God concerning him, was the first, the most important, and repeated with the greatest assiduity in the books of the Prophets; and consequently it employed them the most: God having, for this reason, obliged them to read the books of *Moses* every sabbath, to sing the *Psalms* of *David*, and

to examine the writings of the Prophets, where the promise of the Messiah was a thousand times repeated.

We may add a great deal of light to this observation, if we consider that the circumstances of the *Jews* at that time engaged them to give more diligent heed to what the Prophets had declared; and by weighing several matters of fact set down in the Gospel, to shew the universal effect of the lively impression of this notion of the Messiah on the minds of the *Jews*.

Without doubt the estate of the *Jews* at that time, being equally oppressed by the power of the *Romans* and that of *Herod*, could not but put them upon a careful examining of the promises which God had so often vouchsafed them concerning the Messiah; and the rather, because God had often represented to them the kingdom of the Messiah as a temporal kingdom, which was to deliver them from the power of their enemies.

This appears very evident in the Gospel on several occasions. We find that the people of *Jerusalem* and *Herod* were troubled at the news of the birth of *Jesus*, as that which would probably cause great troubles and desolations, before the kingdom of the Messiah could subdue the *Romans* as well as *Herod*: one sees that the multitudes would have taken Christ, and proclaimed him their king, and submitted themselves to him as the true Messiah; one sees that Christ's own disciples, both before and after his death, talked agreeably to these popular ideas. What else can we make of that passage of the mother of *James* and *John*, when she begs for them the chief places in his kingdom? When the Apostles dispute which of them should be the greatest, was it not an effect of the same cause? Did not the Apostles, when they went to *Emaus*, discourse at the same rate? Did not they express themselves with much grief and trouble, before they were instructed in the most sublime truths of the Gospel? *But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.*

It is also very observable, that *John the Baptist* appears and administers the sacrament of baptism at this time: this his practice gave the *Jews* occasion to take him for the Messiah; but what ground had they to think so? surely from what they had read in *Ezekiel*, chap. xxxvi. verse 25. And indeed, when the great council of the *Jews* deputed some persons to him, they charged them to know of him whether he were the Messiah or not; and if not, why he exercised a function which that prophecy seemed to appropriate to the Messiah himself, in calling him the Angel of the Covenant?

The same truth may also be collected from what is related to us concerning the opinions of the *Jews* about the person of Christ: *Whom*, saith our Saviour, *do people say I am?* And the Apostles answer, that some said he was *John the Baptist*, others *Jeremiah*, others *Elias*, and others again *that Prophet*, that is to say the Messiah, who is so called by way of excellence in the xviiith of *Deuteronomy*. And we find that when *Jesus Christ* styled himself *the Son of Man*, the multitudes easily conceived that he alluded to the seventh of *Daniel*, where the Messiah is so called.

We perceive also, from many other places in the Gospel, that the multitudes were very well acquainted with those passages in the *Old Testament*

tament which were commonly applied to the Messiah: *The Messiah, when he appears, say they, will he do greater signs than this man doth?* Others are offended because Jesus Christ was of *Nazareth*, arguing from thence that he could not be the Messiah; others maintain that, when the Messiah should come, it would not be known whence he was; and others again asserted, that the Messiah was to continue for ever: all which is an evident sign that the ideas of the Messiah were very familiar among the *Jews*.

This must have been so of necessity, because the *Samaritans* themselves were possessed with the same ideas, though they had not so great an extent of light as the *Jews* had. They did not indeed altogether reject the writings of the Prophets, but rather studied them with care: their animosity against the *Jews*, and their jealousy upon account of the promise, of the place of the temple, and other things in question, do manifestly shew that the characters of the Messiah were known to them, and that they were exactly informed in that whole matter.

One ought also to take notice, that as the Apostles call that *thefulness of time*, because the times set down by the Prophets were almost expired, and the sceptre was already departed from *Judah*, the weeks of *Daniel* were ended, and the kingdoms of *Syria* and *Egypt* were overturned, so there were several good men who were filled with an expectation of the Messiah. *Anna* and *Simeon* are represented to us as those who, by their study of the Holy Scriptures, had discovered that the time of the coming of the Messiah was near at hand; much in the same manner as *Daniel* is represented to us to have learnt from the prophecy of *Jeremiah*, that the captivity was almost expired,

I shall add one argument more, which seems beyond exception; that many persons were found, about the time of Jesus Christ, who were either drawn by others into an opinion of their being the Messiah, or who of themselves desired to be accounted so. Thus we are told that the flatterers of *Herod the Great* gave him the title of *Messiah*: of this number were *Theudas* and *Judas Gaulonites*, with some others. Thus also, soon after, some applied the prophecies concerning the Messiah to *Vespasian* the emperor, because he had been chosen in the east. This is attested by *Josephus*, *Tacitus*, and *Suetonius*, who assure us that the notion of the promised Messiah, as of a great king, was very common in the east, and not unknown in the west.

We know that, under the emperor *Adrian*, *Barchochab* was the cause of a terrible sedition, by making the *Jews* believe that he was the Messiah: and we cannot be ignorant how many such like impostors have been since, who have abused the credulity of the *Jews*, even until *Sabbatai Servi* (a), who deluded them about one and twenty years since.

Lastly, we cannot but think that this idea of the Messiah was always fresh among the *Jews*, because we find that from that time they have continually disputed with the Christians about this matter; because they tell us of two Messiahs, one the son of *Judah*, and the other the son of *Joseph*; and because, in all places of the world whither they are scattered, they speak of the Messiah in their Commentaries on the Scriptures,

(a) *Rycaut*, Turk. Hist. vol. 2. p. 174, &c.

in their sermons, in their public prayers, and their common conversation.

Surely if any time can be supposed wherein they might have lost their knowledge and distinct hope of the Messiah, it must be since the time appointed for his coming is expired, when, by the Christians insulting over their vain expectations, they have been obliged (finding themselves disappointed by prophetic calculations) to set up that rash maxim, *Cursed is he that computes the times*; and therefore it is evident, that these notions were much more lively in them when their hopes were well grounded, and when they might pretend to see them accomplished.

It is no less certain, that the model appointed by God, by means of which the Messiah might be certainly known, did still subsist in the same manner as God at first had formed it: but that I may give a full light to this capital truth, I shall tie myself to consider the several arguments for it distinctly; and shall begin with those which shew that the commonwealth of the *Jews* did subsist according to the Divine model; and then proceed to others, which demonstrate that God had therein preserved all the distinctions necessary to his design.

CH A P. III.

That the Commonwealth of the Jews did still subsist, and follow the Model which God had formed, in order to the certain Knowing of the MESSIAH.

THERE are two things which seem to contradict this proposition: the one is, the overturning of the *Jewish State*; the other is, the corruption of their religion: but it is easy to remove both these difficulties.

For the overturning of the state of the *Jews* did not draw along with it that of the Scripture, and the laws on which it was founded, and afterwards governed; wherefore the case of this republic is not the same with that of *Athens* or *Lacedæmon*, which at present subsist no where but in books, because there are no people now that follow the laws of the ancient legislators of *Sparta* or *Athens*.

But, on the contrary, we find the *Jews*, in all parts of the world, keeping these laws with great carefulness, studying them with the greatest application, and flattering themselves that God will one day re-establish them in *Judea*, which they expect by means of the Messiah, whom God at first promised to them.

It is now above 1600 years that they have been scattered throughout the world, and yet we find not that their condition has made them change their measures or hopes; and though they have already been deceived by
a great

a great number of false Messiahs, yet do not they for all that look upon the condition of their commonwealth as irrecoverable.

Now, if during so long a series of ages they have kept their laws with so much carefulness, if they still religiously observe all those laws which could be kept without the bounds of the Holy Land; who sees not but that in all probability they must have kept them more exactly at the time of Jesus Christ, and before his coming, when they could keep them with much more ease than since that time, and that for many considerable reasons?

For, first, Their dispersion then was in one only nation; whereas now they are scattered amongst Heathens, Christians, and Mahometans.

2. They had then Prophets, who exhorted them to the observance of these laws, which now they have wanted for so many ages.

3. They had often princes that were very favourable to them, such as *Cyrus* and *Darius*, who ordered that sacrifices should be offered for themselves, in the temple at *Jerusalem*; and *Pompey* afterwards had the same inclination for them: whereas, since the time of their dispersion, they have scarcely met with any one prince who has been favourable to them, if we except *Julian* the apostate; who, from an effect of his hatred against the Christians, did vainly strive to re-establish them.

4. They had a temple, to which the whole state of their republic was fixed; *Herod*, about the time of our Saviour, had most magnificently repaired it: whereas now, for so many ages, they have neither temple nor altar.

5. They had high-priests among them that were entrusted with the sovereign power, and were kings of their nation; whereas now they have neither king nor prince of their faith.

6. Their laws being translated into *Greek* since the time of *Ptolemy Philadelphus*, it gave occasion to an extraordinary jealousy between the *Jews* of *Egypt*, who had the text of Scripture in *Greek*, and between those of *Jerusalem*, who had it in *Hebrew*; whereas now, all this is altogether ceased, all the *Jews* now, for many ages, making use only of the *Hebrew* text.

Since, therefore, we find that they, without prophets, without king, out of their own country, &c. have observed these laws for so many ages, notwithstanding their dispersion throughout all places, and amongst all sorts of people; how much rather may we conceive they did so since the time of *Ezra*, who placed the books of the *Old Testament* in the order in which we have them at this day? There are only 542 years from the time of the return of their captivity, which happened in the year 3468, to the birth of Christ; and but 259 years from their return; to the translation of the Seventy: and we know that above 1600 years are passed since their general dispersion.

Moreover, it appears that the *Romans* had so well preserved the form of the *Jewish* government from *Pompey's* time, as well as that of their religion, that a *Roman* general sent to demand a kind of permission of the *Jews*, to let him pass with the *Roman* eagles through *Syria*. We know that those eagles were never set up at *Jerusalem*; but it was at a time when a *Roman* commander intended to stir up the *Jews* to sedition,

and

and by that means to make the emperor their enemy. Yea, we find, that though the *Romans* reserved to themselves the power of the sword, yet they permitted to the *Jews* the judgment of zeal, against those whom they called Heretics, whom they tore to pieces, to execute the rigour of the law.

If we find that a *Roman* proconsul would not concern himself with questions of their law, arising without the bounds of their own country, how much rather may we judge that they enjoyed an entire liberty within *Judea*? And, indeed, we find the priests sending their commissioners to *Damascus* (b) against the Christians, without doubt with design to execute the law against impostors. *St. Paul* was beaten several times with forty stripes, save one, which could not be upon any other pretence but to obey the law in that matter.

These proofs are sufficient to make out that the commonwealth of the *Jews* subsisted still in the same manner as God instituted it.

And as for what concerns the overthrow of their religion, as God had interwoven the laws that regulated it, with those of their government, so that their religion was nothing else but a religious policy; it is evident that, their government continuing at the time of *Jesus Christ*, we cannot doubt but that their religion, notwithstanding the corruption which the Pharisees and traditionary *Jews*, whom *Christ* continually censures, had introduced, did still continue pure enough to answer the model which God had framed.

They rejected the *Samaritans*, as appears from the ivth of *St. John*, and looked upon them as Heretics, having no commerce with them.

They lived in a perfect alienation from the Heathen: it is with this *St. Peter* begins his discourse to the assembly at the house of *Cornelius*, *Acts* x. 28.

They lived in an exact observance of the solemn feasts which God had prescribed them, viz. the passover, pentecost, the feast of expiation, and of tabernacles.

They observed the feasts which their ancestors had joined to these upon extraordinary occasions, as that of the dedication, that of *Lots*; and some feasts which they kept then, as they do to this day. This appears by the history of the Gospel, and by the acts of the Apostles.

They assisted at these solemn festivals with much regularity.

They did not till their ground till the seventh year, according to God's command, which made the Heathen princes which were over them, to release them from paying any tribute that year, as may be seen in *Josephus* and other authors.

They taught the law in their synagogues, and that every sabbath day.

They were so scrupulous in their observation of the sabbath, that they accused our Saviour for healing the sick on that day.

It appears that lepers were sequestered, and that they observed the distinction of the several kinds of leprosy, according to the law of *Moses*.

We find, by the history of the *Gadarenes*, that swine were looked upon as unclean beasts.

(b) *Acts* ix. 4.

It is certain that they paid the tribute which was appointed for the use of the temple, according to the law of *Moses*, and the re-establishment of that custom, which we find II. *Chron.* xxiv. 5. *Josephus* (c) tells us that this practice was continued till the destruction of the temple. We meet with the same in *Tacitus*, and other Heathen authors of that time.

I acknowledge that at the same time they were extremely corrupt in their doctrines, with which Christ upbraids the Pharisees and Sadducees: but this corruption respected rather their morals, than the externals of their religion; as appears plainly from hence, that Jesus Christ upbraids the Pharisees with their tithing mint and cummin, that is, with their observance of outward niceties, whilst they neglected the very essentials of piety.

They held that Heathens could not pass for their neighbours; from whence it would follow, that God did not forbid them to bear false witness against a Heathen. Hence also they concluded that it was lawful for them to kill their enemies; and this fomented their hatred and animosity against all other nations. It was on this account that the Disciples of Jesus Christ marvelled that he talked with a *Samaritan* woman.

Their decisions concerning adultery were no less corrupt, which they declared to be no sin, so long as it did not proceed to the outward act; which opinion of theirs was more gross than that of many Heathens, who had a truer idea of the purity of heart which God requires of us, as well as that of the body. But yet this did not altogether destroy their religion, though it obscured the excellency and sublimity thereof.

As for the Sadducees, besides that their errors were only speculative, amongst the greatest part of them, it is certain that what the Gospel saith of their denying the existence of souls and spirits, and the doctrine of the resurrection, must be understood with some qualification, as the learned have solidly proved, and, amongst others, Dr. *Lightfoot* on the Gospels.

And without repeating those things which secured the preservation of their state, and which also visibly tended to the preserving of their religion, I shall only observe, that the *Jews*, at this day, with very little difference, are found in the same practices and opinions, as to their religion, which they had at the time of our Saviour.

Seeing, then, that after so long a time of sixteen hundred years we find no greater change in their belief (though their traditions are considerably increased, the rules whereof they have infinitely multiplied, and thereby increased this corruption), how can it be imagined that the religion of the *Jews* was wholly lost, or had no being at the time of our Saviour Jesus Christ?

Let this therefore be established as a certain truth, That the commonwealth of the *Jews* subsisting entirely, it was easy to know whether the distinctions which were necessary to discover and make known the Messiah, were still found in the state of the *Jews* and their religion. This is that I am now going to make out.

CHAP. IV.

C H A P. IV.

That all the Distinctions necessary for discovering of the MESSIAH, are continued in the State of the JEWS, at the Time of our LORD.

I DO not know whether any man can deny that circumcision, which is one of the principal marks of the *Jews*, was practised at that time: if any one should dare to dispute this truth, we need only to represent to him, that the main dispute between the first Disciples of Jesus Christ and the *Jews*, was about the observation of this ceremony.

Neither were the *Jews* only obstinate in this belief; but we find also that those who first embraced the Christian religion, maintained that the Heathens themselves ought to submit to the yoke of circumcision, before they could enter into the Divine covenant, and enjoy the privileges of God's people, whom circumcision distinguished from the rest of the world.

One sees, that though God scattered the ten tribes, yet some of them still remained in *Palestine*, and were distinctly known as such. This appears from the *Acts of the Apostles*, where mention is made of a widow of the tribe of *Asher*; and St. Paul boasts of his being a *Benjamite*.

They upbraided *Herod*, notwithstanding he was their king, with his being an *Edomite*, and not originally a *Jew*.

One sees, that about *Tyre* and *Sidon* there remained still a distinct knowledge of the *Canaanites*.

It is known that *Galilee* was less esteemed than *Judea*, because many of the *Gentiles* were settled there, by which means the *Jews* of that province were obliged to some commerce with them; from which those who lived more distinct, thought that they had a right to undervalue those that were settled in *Galilee*.

One may also boldly assert, that all places were still distinctly known to what tribe they did belong. Thus it is observed that *Capernaum* was in the borders of *Naphtali* and *Zebulun*, that *Bethlehem* was in the tribe *Judah*, which is related as a thing publicly known.

It is known that the priests still possess the cities which *Joshua* had assigned to them. *Zacharias*, the father of *John the Baptist*, dwelt at *Hebron* (d), a city belonging to the priests in the tribe of *Judah*.

One sees that even the *Samaritan* woman had a distinct knowledge of some famous places in the Holy Land, as *Jacob's Well*, and the possession which he gave to his son *Joseph*; and that those of her religion took a prejudice against the *Jews*, because *Jacob* had built an altar at *Sichem*.

One sees that they kept up the practice of redeeming their first-born, which at this day is still observed by *Jews*.

As also the practice of polygamy, which was so common amongst them, that St. Paul thought himself obliged to forbid the same to the pastors of the

(d) Josh. xxi. 10, 11.

the Christian church, that he might abolish it by little and little amongst those that embraced the doctrine of Jesus Christ.

One sees, from the nineteenth of St. *Matthew*, that divorces were publicly practised amongst them, as they are to this day.

If one makes any reflexion upon the objection the Sadducees made to our Saviour, concerning the woman that successively had seven brothers for her husbands, we shall perceive that the desire of posterity being predominant amongst them, was the cause of the continuance of this custom, which began in the time of the patriarch *Judab*.

We have elsewhere taken notice of the extreme carefulness of the *Jews*, in preserving the marks of their daughters virginity, which has constantly continued down, since the coming of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

The Gospel, which informs us that the *Jews* were deprived of the power of the sword, doth notwithstanding sufficiently signify to us, not only the extreme horror which the *Jews* had conceived against adultery (thus we find Jesus Christ upbraiding the Pharisees, that adulterers, that is, the greatest of sinners, entered into the kingdom of heaven before them), but also that the laws against adulterers and adulteresses were severely executed.

In short, one sees, that by a judgment of zeal, as they call it, they brought a woman to our Saviour which was taken in adultery, before they went about to stone her; for one ought to know, that the law only subjected young women, who were defiled after a contract, to that sort of punishment; because, after they were once contracted, they were reputed the wives of those to whom they were betrothed; and such an one was she of whom we read in the eighth chapter of St. *John*, and not a person actually married, whose punishment, according to the law, was to be strangled.

One sees that St. *Paul* supposeth, that the law which subjected a virgin to the will of her father, and gave him power to make void her vows at pleasure, was still in force.

I will not mention here what the ancients tell us of the distinction which they say was made between virgins and married women, as well in the temple as in their synagogues; I shall only say, that this their tradition is not without ground.

It is known that the order established by *David* for exercising the priestly functions was exactly observed by them: *Zacharias* was of the course of *Abia*, which was the eighth in order, as is mentioned *I. Chron. xxiv. 11.* and he offered incense according to the law, set down *Exod. xxx. verse 7, 8.*

One sees that the *Jews* would not suffer the dead bodies to hang upon the cross after sunset, according to what we find was practised at the time of *Joshua*, in pursuance of that law which we find *Deut. xxi. verse 23.*

I only mention these particulars now, intending hereafter, that I may avoid tedious repetitions, to enlarge more expressly, when I shall come to shew, as to every article, the exact accomplishment of the ancient oracles concerning the Messiah, in the person of our Saviour Jesus Christ; together with the use of these distinctions which bar any other, except

except Jesus Christ, from attributing that title to himself, and from abusing the credulity of the *Jews*.

It would be an easy matter for me to make a numerous list of these characters, according to all the different oracles which God gave to the *Jews* on this subject, and to justify the exact fulfilling of them in the person of Jesus Christ. And indeed it was not without cause that God furnished his people with so great a number of prophecies upon this head, his design being thereby to give us such solid grounds for our faith, by granting to it all these supports, that nothing might be able to shake it.

But because all of them may be referred to certain heads, and that an explication of the chief of them is sufficient to illustrate the rest, I shall stop there now.

I begin therefore with the character of the time in which the Messiah was to appear, and in which Jesus Christ did actually come into the world. And it being utterly impossible for any man to choose the time of his birth, any more than to choose an illustrious forerunner, or a certain place where, or a certain family of which he is to be born, and much less of a virgin for his mother; these characters may satisfy us, that all those that ever pretended to the title of the Messiah, could not reasonably do it.

C H A P. V.

That the Time pointed out by the Prophets for the Coming of the MESSIAH, is the very Time in which JESUS CHRIST appeared to the World.

I HAVE made it appear, in the third part of these reflexions, that the oracle of *Jacob*, Gen. xlix. 10. *The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come*, contains a formal character of the time in which our Saviour was to appear. I am therefore at present to shew, that the *Jews* at that time had wholly lost the authority of which they had been possessed for so many ages, which will most evidently appear from these four Reflexions on the history of the Gospel itself.

The first is on the birth of Jesus Christ, which happened precisely at the time when *Augustus* had ordered that all the subjects of the *Roman* empire should be enrolled; when we find that *Joseph* and the Blessed Virgin went to *Bethlehem*, their own city, to list their names in the register of the *Roman* magistrate, which is an authentic proof of the servitude of that people to the *Romans*.

It will not be amiss here to take notice, first, of *Moses's* numbering the people by Divine authority; secondly, of the numbering which *David* undertook, and for which he was exemplarily punished by God. Now, as God caused the people to be numbered, to shew that they were all

all his subjects, and as *David* numbered them with the same respect, so we must consider this action of *Augustus* was a public testimony of his sovereignty over the *Jews*, who were subdued by *Pompey*.

When *Tertullian* appealed to the public registers of the *Roman* empire, in his apologetic addressed to the *Roman* magistrate who resided at *Carthage*, he gave a sufficient evidence that we have no reason to suspect the relation of the Evangelists. One may join to this, the manner of the relation of these facts which the Evangelists give us; as, for instance, in the baptism of our Lord, they determine the years in which they were done, not only by the year of the high priest, but also by those of *Augustus* and *Tiberius*, &c.

The second reflexion may be made upon the character of one of the Apostles of Jesus Christ, *Levi*, or *Matthew*; who, before our Saviour made choice of him, was a publican: and it seems as if our Saviour had on purpose taken him from that employ, to be one of his Disciples, to give a real instance, and such a one as went every where along with him, that the *Jews*, by paying tribute to the *Roman* empire, had wholly lost their temporal authority, which was to continue till the coming of the Messiah.

Here also may be made a third reflexion, which is very natural, upon a passage related by the Evangelists. They come and ask our Saviour, Whether it were lawful to yield obedience unto the *Romans*? For since God had chosen these people, and had given them judges and princes of his own choosing, they had always an extreme aversion for any foreign domination: of this we have an illustrious example at the time of the siege of *Jerusalem*, when, notwithstanding the remonstrances by *Jeremy*, yet they could not consent to submit. This is that with which they are upbraided, *Exra* iv. verse 19. Neither were they more content with this their state of bondage, at the time of our Saviour; and some of their zealots took this occasion to tempt our Saviour, that they might make him odious, which side soever he should take. Their question is, *Whether it be lawful to pay tribute to Cæsar?* To which he answers, with a Divine wisdom, *Render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's*; which words being joined with the money that he made them produce, which was stamped with the emperor's image, do evidently shew that the *Romans* were sovereign lords in *Judea*: it is known that the coining of money is the undoubted mark of the sovereignty of that prince who makes it pass for current.

But if we must give some further light to the foregoing reflexions, we need only observe the manner of our Saviour's suffering, as it is described to us. The *Jews* do agree, as may be seen in the *Jerusalem Talmud* (e), that criminal judgment was taken away from them forty years before the destruction of *Jerusalem*; and the Gospel supposeth the same thing. The *Jews* did not put Jesus Christ to death, but they carried him to *Pilate*, and demanded that he might be crucified. When *Pilate* said, *Shall I crucify your king?* they answer, *We have no other king but Cæsar*; which confession was the confession of the whole *Jewish* nation, who were assembled at the feast of passover. In short, one sees, that accordingly the *Roman* magistrate passed sentence upon him. He

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(e) *Sanhedr.* fol. 24. 2.

was scourged before they led him to be crucified, which was a punishment amongst the *Romans*. His body is not taken from the cross but by permission from *Pilate*; and the *Roman* soldiers are those dogs, that is, profane heathens, who enclosed him and tormented him, according to the description which *David* has made, *Psalms* xxii.

The *Jews* have here but one answer to make, which God's former dealing with that people seems somewhat to countenance; which is, that as their seventy years captivity under the *Babylonian* empire did not hinder the deferring of the accomplishment of that prophecy of the *sceptre's not departing from Judah*, for some centuries after the said captivity, so neither is it necessary to suppose that the Messiah was to succeed immediately upon the ending of the kingdom of the *Maccabees*, and upon the loss of their liberty under *Pompey*.

But here is a very great difference; for, first, during the *Babylonish* captivity, God still preserved amongst them some form of government, the great lords of the country being chiefly carried away captives, whilst the poorest and most miserable were left behind.

Secondly, the captivity lasted only 70 years, whereas this last dispersion hath lasted above 1600.

Thirdly, the first captivity did not at all abolish those necessary marks whereby the lawful lords of *Judea* might be distinguished; those that were of the tribe of *Judah*, as well as those of other tribes, were very well known, though they were not in possession of the kingdom: whereas now every thing is confounded amongst them; and if one looks into Christian records, he may find that many of the kindred of Jesus Christ were put to death, because they could pretend to the throne of *Judea*.

Moreover, during the captivity of *Babylon*, they had Prophets amongst them who expressly foretold the end of it; whereas, nothing of that kind has yet been since the last destruction of *Jerusalem*, since which time no prophet has appeared amongst them, that advantage being transferred to the Christians, some of which, who next succeeded our Saviour, did foretel the most remarkable events that were to follow to the end of the world.

But if any one should be so nice as to call in question the reasons of the difference here alledged; at least the *Jews* will find nothing to object against the prophecy of *Daniel*, concerning the week at the end of which the Messiah was to appear, and afterwards to be cut off. In short, if it be true that Jesus Christ was born under the empire of *Augustus*, it is no less certain that he entered upon his ministry in the fifteenth year of *Tiberius*, and was crucified the nineteenth of his reign, that is, in the midst of the four hundred eighty-seventh year from the twentieth year of *Artaxerxes*, that is, before the end of the last week pointed out by *Daniel*, as I have shewed in the eighth chapter of the third part of this book.

C H A P. VI.

That JESUS CHRIST had precisely such a Forerunner as the Prophets had described to precede the MESSIAH.

ONE will easily judge that it was agreeable to the greatness of the Messiah, and the contemptible state wherein he was to appear to the world, that he should have a forerunner; accordingly, we find *Isaiab* expressing himself in this manner, the year of the world 3292, almost 700 years before the birth of our Saviour. *Malachi* had expressly foretold the same in his prophecy, about 420 years before his appearance. If this be once granted, it is easy to conceive that the son of a priest, living without any worldly splendor, and dying a violent death, though very glorious for him, was a proper forerunner to that Jesus who himself was to be crucified.

Our business therefore is to inquire whether the characters which the Prophets give to the forerunner of the Messiah, do agree with *John the Baptist*, in whom the Christians maintain that this prophecy of *Malachi* was fulfilled. This may be easily made out.

First, *John the Baptist* was miraculously conceived, at a time when his parents could not promise themselves any such thing: the angel *Gabriel*, who had declared to *Daniel* the coming of the Messiah, by pointing out to him the number of weeks, was the messenger of the conception of this forerunner of the Messiah. Several things passed at his birth, and at the time when they gave him his name, which were very strange, and which could not but be generally known, as well because of the accident which happened to *Zacharias* in the temple, as of his quality, being a priest.

Secondly, the extraordinary life which St. *John* led, being a *Nazarite*, ought to be carefully considered. He lived in a solitary place, as the Prophet *Elijah* did before him.

Thirdly, his preaching also had the character of that ancient Prophet, being thundering, as his was: he neither spared great men, nor those who had the reputation of the greatest sanctity; as the Pharisees particularly, whose pride and hypocrisy he touched to the quick.

Fourthly, he set forth the coming of the Messiah as at the door; *The kingdom of heaven*, said he, *is at hand*; alluding to the seventh of *Daniel*, where the kingdom of the Messiah is represented as a kingdom which was to come down from heaven, whereas the former empires had their rise from the earth.

In short, nothing could be more illustrious than the ministry of this great man.

He baptized publicly, for the space of one year, such as came to him, solemnly engaging them to repentance, in hopes of the sudden appearance of the Messiah. This ceremony, which was an imitation of their custom of initiating proselytes in the Jewish religion, was plainly an essay to establish a new religion, or at least to reform those corruptions which time had introduced into the Jewish religion.

In a word, we find him so generally followed, that the great council of the *Jews* thought fit to send deputies to him, to know whether he were not the Messiah they expected: this great man was so far from abusing the great credit he had gained, that he solemnly protested that he was only the forerunner of the Messiah, who was already come, but was as yet concealed in the midst of them.

His glory became so illustrious, that it stirred up jealousy in the mind of *Herod*, who cast him into prison, and at last caused his head to be cut off in the castle of *Macherom*, to satisfy the lewd *Herodias*, whose marriage, or rather incest, with *Herod*, he had reproved.

Before St. *John* was beheaded, he sends his Disciples to Jesus Christ, to inform himself whether he were the Messiah; which our Saviour proves to them by the miracles which he wrought in their presence, and by the testimony of the Prophet *Isaiah*, which St. *John* had before alleged as a proof of his call.

All these facts were so illustrious, and so well known, that St. *John* constantly passed for a great Prophet amongst the *Jews*, the Pharisees themselves not daring to question it: he received public deputations from the *Jews*, who demanded the reason of his ministry; and he himself sent one to Jesus Christ, that his Disciples might be acquainted with him, and that they might give him a second public testimony; and last of all, he dies a glorious martyr for his purity, after he had made a vast number of Disciples, who were so well dispersed in all places, that St. *Luke* tells us, in the *Acts*, that some of them were found in *Asia*, who received the Gospel and the gifts of the Spirit, in which they had been as it were initiated already by the baptism of St. *John*.

It appears afterwards that St. *John* was looked upon as the forerunner of the Messiah: Jesus Christ saith he was the greatest of all the Prophets; and when *Herod* heard of the reputation of Jesus Christ, he supposed that St. *John* was raised from the dead.

The *Jews* not conceiving that *John the Baptist* was the forerunner of the Messiah, because they understood the prophecy of *Malachi* literally (f) which also make the LXX add to the text the word *Thisbite*, in that passage of *Malachi*; therefore Jesus Christ declares, that it was indeed he of whom *Malachi* had spoken.

I acknowledge that *John the Baptist* did not do any miracle; but then he uttered, 1. so plain an oracle concerning the miraculous effusion of the gifts of the Holy Ghost upon the Disciples, that we find nothing so great or so clear in all the ancient prophecies: *He that comes after me, saith he, shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.*

2. He gave a second oracle, though not so plain as the former, concerning the destruction of *Jerusalem*: *Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and will burn up the chaff with fire.*

These two oracles contain the end of the old dispensation, and the beginning of the new: the miraculous gifts of the Spirit were given to facilitate the publishing of the Gospel among the *Gentiles*; and the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and of the temple, happened as well to punish the crime which the *Jews* had committed when they put the Messiah to death,

death, as to take away all their pretences of believing that the Messiah was not come, who was to appear whilst that temple stood.

But, before I conclude this chapter, I must observe three or four things, which are very necessary to confirm the authority of the testimony which this forerunner of the Messiah hath given to Jesus Christ.

It is a maxim amongst the *Jews*, that he who is acknowledged for a Prophet, may confirm the authority of another, by attesting him to be a true Prophet(g). And this is that which St. *John* did to Christ; he was generally accounted a Prophet, and he attested that Jesus Christ was so. This was that which confounded the elders of the *Jews*, when they demanded of our Saviour, By what authority *John* acted? Jesus Christ answered their question with another, Whether St. *John* had a call from God?

The first observation therefore is, That we cannot accuse him of acting underhand with Jesus Christ, for we do not find any correspondence kept up between them: one of them was the son of a priest, the other of a carpenter's wife; the one dwelt in *Judea*, the other in *Galilee*; the one concealed himself, whilst the other's reputation had got him a great many Disciples. The Disciples of the one were very jealous of the Disciples of the other, and endeavoured to inspire their master with the jealousy that possessed themselves.

The second is, That the Disciples of Jesus are the persons that wrote the history of *John the Baptist*, which they do as those who were concerned for his glory and reputation; though at first they did not stand in the least by him, but rather by that means inflamed *Herod's* hatred against them, who contributed to the death of St. *John*, as well as of Jesus Christ.

The third is, That when St. *John* was beheaded, who never had any correspondence with Jesus Christ, it is extravagant to conceive, that the Disciples of Jesus Christ should have forged the testimony which they say this great man gave to Christ, because this would have been to employ the authority of a man who, never having wrought any miracles, and being long since beheaded by the order of *Herod*, seemed to be quite forgotten.

The fourth is, That it is not probable that they could ever entertain a design of imposing on the world in such a manner as this, which related to public facts known to all *Judea*, to all the priests, yea, to the whole nation assembled at their public feasts, to *Herod* the king, and to the Disciples of *John* themselves, who would not have been wanting to refute and convince them; whereas, on the contrary, we see, that by the disposition which St. *John* had wrought in them, they were easily won to the faith of Christ. This is evident, from the example of *Apollos*, a Disciple of *John the Baptist's* Disciples, who became afterwards so excellent a preacher of the Christian religion.

(g) *Maimond. de fundam. legis.*

C H A P. VII.

That JESUS CHRIST was born of the Family of DAVID, then reduced to a mean Condition, as had been already foretold by the Prophets.

WE have considered the time in which our Saviour was to be born; let us now speak of the family from whence he was to proceed. It has been proved already, that this promise was made to the family of *David* by *Nathan* the Prophet, II. *Sam.* vii. 12. I *Chron.* xvii. 11. in the year of the world 2959. *David* repeats this his hope, *Psalms* lxxxix. 4. and *Psalms* cxxxiii. 11. And about the year of the world 3292, the Prophet *Isaiah* adds further, that the Messiah should be in a despicable condition.

There are four things which fully confirm this truth.

The first is, the kindred which was between *Elizabeth* and the Blessed Virgin, whence it appeared that her relations were of the tribe of *Judah*, and that she was known to be of the family of *David*.

One ought to observe here a thing, which though at first sight seems to be of small importance, yet we cannot but think that St. *Luke* wrote it without design; and that is, the journey of the Blessed Virgin to one of the cities of *Judah*, after her conception, to visit *Elizabeth* her kinswoman, the wife of *Zachariah*, and the mother of *John the Baptist*. I shall not mention at present any other reasons of this journey, which may seem to be worthy of the Divine wisdom; and so I shall only observe at present, that this visit was made to *Elizabeth* in a city of *Judah*, which is a demonstrative proof that Jesus Christ was of the family of *David*, and consequently of that of *Judah*; so that this is far from being made use of as an objection against it, as some have done.

It is well known, that the priests had leave to take a wife of what tribe they pleased: but who sees not at first sight, that it was natural for a priest, dwelling in one of the cities of *Judah*, to marry in that tribe amongst whom he lived; besides that the priests had of a long time affected to make alliances with that tribe, before any other?

The second thing which ought to be joined to this, is, the manner of *Elizabeth*'s expressing herself to the Blessed Virgin, considering her as bearing the Messiah in her womb; and upon this account she called her the Mother of my Lord, alluding to *Psalms* cx.

The third is, that the Blessed Virgin, in her song, where she speaks of herself as the person in whom the promise made to *Abraham* was accomplished, *Luke* i. verse 54, 55. which promise concerned the Messiah, sets forth herself as heiress to the kings of *Judah*, and chosen before any of her ancestors, notwithstanding all their glory: *He hath put down, saith she, the mighty from their seats, and hath exalted them of low degree.*

The fourth is, that *Zachariah* the priest, who was well acquainted with the Blessed Virgin, at whose house she had been during the first three months of her being with child, and who could not be ignorant

of

of her lineage, always owned her to be of the family of *David*. It is evident that he looked upon the Blessed Virgin as the mother of the Messiah, as well as *Elizabeth* his wife. He seems to have considered the infant that was to be born of her, as the Redeemer promised to *Abraham*, and the Blessed Virgin as the heiress of *David*; and therefore saith, *That God had raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David*. There can be nothing more convincing than this observation; for, first, *Zachariah* was a priest, that is, one of those to whom the care of the genealogies of the *Jews* was committed. 2. He appears to have been very well versed in the prophecies which fixed the Messiah to the family of *David*. 3. He considered his son as the forerunner of the Messiah, when he proposed that the oracle of *Malachi* should be fulfilled in that son whom God had so miraculously bestowed upon him. 4. He needed only have examined the agreements of her marriage, and he would then certainly know whether the Blessed Virgin was not of another tribe, which would have cured him of any possible illusion.

In short, St. *Luke* observes very exactly, that this journey of the Virgin to her kinswoman, and all the circumstances which prove the Blessed Virgin to have been of the family of *David*, were things well known throughout all the hill-country of *Judea*, that it might not be pretended that this important fact was any ways obscure.

But, secondly, this genealogy of Jesus Christ is carried up to *David* and *Judah*; and it is visible that this was a thing exactly known, especially, since Jesus Christ always passed for the son of *David*, blind men themselves calling him so.

A third thing to be considered is, the Blessed Virgin's going to *Bethlehem*, to be there enrolled, according to the decree of *Augustus Caesar*. There had been several numberings of the people; the first was at the appointment of God himself; the second was by an order from *David*; and in both, an exact distinction was made between the tribes themselves, and the families of each tribe: and one sees that the same was observed in this last register, which was made by *Augustus's* decree in the 4000th year of the world.

Joseph and *Mary* went up to *Bethlehem*, which was the seat of *David's* family: nothing appears here of design or affectation; they made no stay at *Bethlehem*, and the occasion that brought them thither was absolutely strange and unlooked for; and yet it was certainly an accomplishment of that prophecy of *Micah*, chap. v. verse 2. *But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, &c.*

This remark upon the decree of *Augustus* is of great moment, because thereby the Virgin's being of the family of *David* appears to be the most indisputable truth in the world; as having been owned first by the whole family of *Judah* for three months; secondly, by the genealogy which subsisted entire, as the *Talmudists* themselves grant in the treatise *de Sponsah*, chap. iv. sect. 5; where they testify that the genealogy of the royal family was without difficulty; thirdly, by the public testimony of all their kindred, who met in a body before the *Roman* magistrate.

The fourth remark is, that when *Herod* knew of the birth of the Messiah at *Bethlehem*, where, by the confession of the *Jews*, he was to be born, he would have involved Jesus Christ in the massacre which swept

away the innocent children, if the same Providence which brought him to *Bethlehem*, to demonstrate that he was of the house of *David*, had not withdrawn him from thence, to preserve him from that tyrant who was afraid of being cast from his throne by one of *David's* heirs.

The fifth is, that *Jesus Christ* did not only often allude to the place of his birth, in calling himself *the Bread come down from Heaven*, the word *Bethlehem* signifying the House of Bread, but he constantly owned himself for the son of *David*. Upon this it is that he grounds the objection which he makes to the *Jews*; *How is it that David calls the Messiah his Lord?* And indeed this fact was so constantly owned by all that even persons who were possessed with devils did not dispute it, as may be seen in the Evangelists.

The sixth is, that though two of the Evangelists set down the genealogy of our Saviour with some difference, yet the *Jews* never took occasion from thence to question *Jesus Christ's* descent from *David*; his Apostles always building on that foundation; which may be seen as a thing taken for granted in *St. Peter's* sermon, *Acts ii.* and in the epistles of *St. Paul*, where we find our Saviour always styled *the Son of David* according to the flesh.

To these already mentioned we may add the three following observations. The first is, that if the genealogy of our Saviour had not been distinctly known, the Apostles would never have troubled themselves to have set it down; much less would they have placed it in the front of their books, as knowing that the beginnings of books are always more examined than the ends, and would certainly be so by a people who always stuck very close to their genealogies. In short, either the genealogies of the *Jews* were at that time as confused as they are at present, and so they could not have served as characters to discover the Messiah by; in which case the Apostles would have contented themselves to have hinted that *Jesus Christ* always passed for the son of *David*, as they have done in several places of their writings, without giving us the whole series of his pedigree; or else they were at that time distinctly known, in which case it was the easiest thing in the world to have confuted them.

The second is, that the differences which are found between the genealogy of *Jesus Christ* set down by *St. Matthew*, and that by *St. Luke*, is so far from giving us an occasion to doubt of the Apostles faithfulness in this matter, that indeed it is a new proof of their exactness in a matter of so great importance; for it can scarcely be imagined but that, in so long a series of ages, there must have been some of the ancestors of our Saviour in which that law took place, which obliged the younger brother to marry the widow of his elder brother deceased without issue, and so to raise up seed to him, which gave occasion to a genealogy not natural, but legal, the children bearing the name of the deceased elder brother, and possessing his estate. Now the Evangelists have set down both these genealogies exactly, which is an invincible argument of their care and fidelity.

The third is, that it was so much the more necessary to make this remark in the genealogy of the Messiah, because, as we have observed elsewhere, it was with relation to the desire of giving birth to the Messiah, or of having children which might live under his empire, that God

at first permitted this kind of incest with the widow of a deceased brother, which otherwise was so severely prohibited by the law.

As to the low estate to which the family of *David* was then reduced, it is visible that *David* and *Solomon* reigned with great glory; but *Rehoboam* succeeding them, ten tribes fell from him to *Jeroboam*, in the year of the world 3029; and the posterity of *Rehoboam* was afterwards dethroned by *Nebuchadnezzar*, who carried *Zedechiah* the king into captivity in the year 3416.

After their return from captivity, they were entirely thrust from the throne: the priests at first governing that nation; the *Maccabees*, who were of the family of *Levi*, reigning in *Judea*, from the return of the captivity of *Babylon*, until *Herod* the *Edomite*, who was made master of *Judea* by the favour of the *Romans*.

2. The family of *David* was at that time removed from their ancient seat, and was now fixed at *Nazareth*, where Providence seems to have removed them from *Bethlehem*, to take away that object of *Herod's* jealousy, which would have offended him; as we see it did, when the wise men acquainted him with the birth of *Jesus*, which obliged him to make a diligent inquiry after the place where the *Messiah* was to be born; that *Messiah* whom he conceived to be a prince, who would rob him of the sovereignty to which he was raised.

In the third place, the Blessed Virgin was betrothed to a carpenter. *Justin Martyr* tells us that *Jesus Christ* made ploughs. See what the heirs of the kings of *Judah* were reduced to.

Fourthly, when she came to *Bethlehem*, she lodged in an inn, her kindred being not in a condition to afford her better accommodation.

It appears that the Divine Providence was very careful in executing this design. There were some decays of the family of *David*, which the Blessed Virgin expresses in her song. She was descended from the younger brothers of deposed princes, and reduced to a private state: she speaks of nothing but of lowliness and meanness, not only in a way of humility, but to demonstrate the fulfilling of the prophecy concerning the throne of *Jesse*.

But that this might appear more evidently, and confirmed by the law, as it was her duty to present her son in the temple after the seventh day, with an offering, so she does not offer what is prescribed to the rich and wealthy, but an offering which is appropriated by God in the law to poor people, as appears *Lev. xii*.

One sees, by the marriage feast at *Cana* in *Galilee*, that the kindred of *Jesus Christ* were not very rich: their wanting of wine on such an occasion was no great mark of plenty.

One sees also, that *Jesus Christ* frequently represents himself as not having where to rest his head: on the cross he recommends his mother to one of his Disciples, and was himself maintained by those who followed him.

C H A P. VIII.

That JESUS CHRIST was conceived by the Virgin MARY, without any Operation of Man.

AS this article is one of the most important of our religion, so it is well worth our attentive consideration. We may take notice here, that, according to the observation of *Justin Martyr* (b), the fable of *Perseus* took its rise from the prophecy of *Isaiah*. However, that prophecy being very express, according to the translation of the *LXX*, we are to consider how it was accomplished. It will not be enough here to say, that ordinarily extreme poverty is a sufficient bar against the suspicion of adultery; and therefore we desire the reader only to call to mind the observations set down in the second chapter of the second part of these Reflexions on the Books of the law of *Moses*. For

1. Polygamy and divorces were very frequent in the time of Jesus Christ, as appears from several passages of the Gospel, where God was pleased to give us examples thereof.

2. God was willing to give us instances of his severity against adulteresses, amongst which those were reckoned who suffered themselves to be defiled after they were betrothed. We have an example hereof in the eighth chapter of the Gospel according to St. *John*, which I have illustrated in the fourth chapter of this fourth part.

3. It appears that the same laws which engaged parents to preserve the virginity of their daughters, did continue, and were still observed by the *Jews*, as well as those other laws which constituted the body of their religion: when Jesus Christ upbraids the *Jews* for having changed the true sense of the law, yet he never reproaches them upon this account.

4. The relation set down in the eighth chapter of St. *John*, makes it appear that the waters of jealousy still retained their virtue; that which Jesus Christ writ on the ground being probably nothing else but the curses which the law denounced against the woman that should violate her honour.

I have made it very evident, in the twentieth chapter of my second part, what was the use of those laws concerning the marks of virginity, to prevent any doubts that might arise concerning the same: it remains now to consider the several passages of the Evangelists, and to see what proofs we can find there to confirm this point, that *Mary* was indeed a virgin when she conceived Jesus Christ, and how we may answer the objections which the enemies of Christianity make against this truth.

The Evangelists tell us that this remarkable fact was declared by the Angel *Gabriel*, who had before foretold to *Daniel* the coming of the Messiah, and signified the exact time thereof. The conception of *Isaac* by a barren mother, as well as that of *Samuel* and *John the Baptist*, had been

already

(b) *Dial. cum Typh.* p. 297. *Isai.* 5.

already declared in the same manner; and one miracle ought to serve as a preparation for the belief of a greater.

When the Disciples of Jesus Christ speak of the fact, they speak of it as a thing known throughout all *Jerusalem*, and which had no relation to their master. Besides, we know the jealousy that was between the Disciples of St. *John* and those of our Saviour.

But we have a further account besides of the message of an Angel to *Joseph*, after he had perceived that his betrothed wife was with child; for when he was ready to divorce her, either by exposing her to the rigour of the Divine law, *Deut.* xxii. 23. or else by exempting her from that extremity, he is diverted from his intention by this warning from heaven. In all which we meet with nothing but what is very probable; for *Joseph* expresses his hatred and dislike, as conceiving her to be debauched, and was resolved not to receive her, but by an order from heaven.

Moreover it is very remarkable, that we find all things recited in such a manner, as it was necessary they should come to pass, on supposition that the Messiah was to be born of a virgin of the house of *David*.

For, first, we find this event appeared incredible to the person herself who was designed to effect it, because she could not easily make the application at first.

2. It caused exceeding joy to the person who saw herself chosen by God to fulfil so glorious a promise, whereby the family of *David* was to be restored to its ancient lustre. This is evident from the hymn of the Blessed Virgin; which if we compare with the *Psalms* of *David*, we shall see that that family still retained all the piety of their ancestors, with all those signs of acknowledgment which an event of such a nature did justly require.

3. It appears that *Joseph* acquiesced in this truth, he who otherwise did not seem very credulous, till he was instructed from heaven concerning a matter so rare and difficult to be conceived. He retires for some time into *Egypt*, and affords *Mary* and her son all the service they could reasonably expect from him.

St. *Jerome* alleges three reasons why it was needful for the Blessed Virgin to be betrothed to *Joseph* (i).

1. That the original of the Blessed Virgin might be proved by the pedigree of *Joseph*, to whom she was related.

2. That, according to the law of *Moses*, she might not be stoned as an adulteress.

3. That in her flight into *Egypt* she might have the comfort of a guardian rather than of a husband.

Neither can any thing be opposed to the belief of these matters, but some very weak conjectures: the first is, that her being contracted doth something obscure the distinct notion of virginity; and secondly, that the Blessed Virgin did always pass for the wife of *Joseph*, even according to the style of Jesus Christ himself; and lastly, that the relation which the Evangelists give of this matter, was not known till long after the death of Jesus Christ.

But

(i) Contr. *Helvidium*.

But it is an easy matter to satisfy the mind of any reasonable reader in this thing. It was necessary that the Blessed Virgin should be betrothed:

1. To secure her life, which would have been in danger if she had been delivered whilst she was reputed to be a virgin; for she would have been accused of whoredom, and consequently have been put to death.

2. It was necessary she should be betrothed, and pass for the lawful wife of *Joseph*, that her son might not be banished from the congregation of *Israel*, as a bastard, in the rigour of the law.

As for the other objection, I easily grant that the Blessed Virgin always passed for the wife of *Joseph*: she herself saith, *I and thy father sought thee*. But withal, at that very time, Jesus Christ unveiled that mystery in the presence of all the *Jews*, maintaining that he was the Son of God, in whose house he was at that time: it was at a solemn feast of the *Jews*, where the whole nation was assembled, and in the midst of an assembly of their Doctors, that he declared the temple to be the house of his Father, as he afterwards constantly called it.

We find him, at another time, declaring the same in the presence of his family at *Cana in Galilee*: *Woman, what have I to do with thee?* saith he to the Blessed Virgin (*x*); to put her in mind of some passages which could not but preserve in her a very particular respect for him.

He gives yet a further degree of light into this matter, when, his mother seeking to come at him, he saith, *Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?* that is, kinsmen. It is probable that *Joseph* was dead before our Saviour entered upon his ministry; however, his making no mention of his reputed father, shews how careful he was to avoid any thing that might obscure his miraculous birth.

Last of all, it is very considerable, that this passage being not the only character, which was to distinguish the Messiah from all others, but was to be confirmed by the miracles of Jesus Christ, by his resurrection, and those other proofs of his Divine nature, it was at first not much insisted on, because there was a necessity that it should continue veiled for some time, upon the account of the frequent apparitions of Angels, and of God himself in a human form, that so the truth of his humanity should be established by his life and death, before the publication of his miraculous conception.

For it is certain that the Apostles preached up this truth, and that the Evangelists had put it in writing before the destruction of the *Jewish* commonwealth; and yet we do not find that it was ever contested. The Evangelists describe the methods which the *Jews* took to make the resurrection of Christ to be doubted of, and to slight his miracles; and do we think they would not as well have given us the objections of the *Jews* against a thing of which till then never any instance had been known in the world?

I know very well that some of the ancients have told us that the *Jews* were offended, that the Blessed Virgin, after she was delivered of our Saviour, should seat herself in the place appointed for virgins; and that, because *Zacharias* the priest maintained her in so doing, he was thereupon

thereupon killed by them between the temple and the altar, with which our Saviour upbraids the *Jews*. I know also that they affirm that she was forced to confirm the truth of her virginity, by submitting herself to a search of matrons: yet I cannot believe that she ever underwent any such examination, of which the silence of the *Evangelists*, and *St. Luke* in particular, fully convinces me; and therefore I am inclined to think that no such objection was ever made against her.

In the mean time, it is well worth our noting, 1. That the Blessed Virgin had *Zachariah* the priest as an examiner and witness of her behaviour from the beginning, at whose house she abode during the first months of her being with child, and who publicly divulged the miraculous birth of his own son, and his leaping in his mother's womb at the salutation of the Blessed Virgin.

2. That the Blessed Virgin lived many years after the passion of our Saviour, that she might undergo and answer any accusations of that nature.

3. That she also had for witnesses of the miracles which attended her conception, all the Disciples of *St. John*, as well as those of *Jesus Christ*; though the Disciples of *St. John* did not agree with the Disciples of *Jesus Christ*.

4. That what she declared of herself, was not a fact which had no traces whereby it might be examined in the *Old Testament*.

5. That the *Jews* had thirty years to examine the several particulars which had relation to the Messiah, and the miraculous manner of his birth, at the time when she published this particular passage of her life.

6. That we cannot call in question the veracity of the Blessed Virgin in the account which she gives us of what concerned herself, of which no witness could be produced, forasmuch as the accomplishment of that part of her prophecy, that *all nations should call her blessed*, clearly shews that she had received the spirit of prophecy; no more than we can suspect any forgeries in the relations of other Prophets, though we have no other testimony concerning them, but that of the Prophets themselves.

CHAP. IX.

That *JESUS CHRIST* lived and preached after the same Manner as the *PROPHETS* had foretold the *MESSIAH* should do.

I HAVE clearly shewn that *Jesus Christ* was born of the posterity of *Adam*, by *Seth*, by *Noah*; by *Abraham*; by *Isaac*, by *Jacob*, by *Judah*, by *David*, as it was foretold of the Messiah by the most ancient oracles, the increase of which I have already taken notice in my third part.

I have afterwards shewed, that *Jesus Christ* was born of a virgin, whereby

whereby those oracles, *The seed of the woman shall bruise thy head (l)*, and *A virgin shall conceive and bear a son (m)*, seemed to be clearly accomplished. Let us now see, according to those oracles, what kind of person the Messiah was to be, from his birth to his death, according to those ideas which the Prophets have given us.

Moses expressly tells us, *Deut. 18.* that the Messiah was to resemble him; *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet like unto me (n)*: which place, as I have observed before, has been so constantly applied to the Messiah, that it appears that not only *John the Baptist*, when he sent his Disciples to *Jesus Christ*, *Philip* speaking to *Nathanael*, and the Disciples when they were asked by our Saviour who he was, but also the Samaritan woman, understood it so without the least hesitation, and said, That when the Messiah should come, he would tell them all things.

In short, one sees an exact proportion between *Moses* and *Jesus Christ*; not only because our Saviour was saved in his infancy from the hand of *Herod*, and from a river of blood, like another *Moses*; or because *Egypt* served for a retreat to him, as *Moses* had hid himself in *Arabia*; or because he was rejected of his brethren, those of *Nazareth*, who would have thrown him headlong from a rock, because he declared himself to be the promised deliverer and Messiah, by applying to himself the words of *Isaiah*, *The spirit of the Lord is upon me, &c.*

Neither shall I now take notice of his being despised and disowned by his brethren, and called a *Galilean*, whereas indeed he was of *Judea*; for indeed the Messiah was to be treated as a *Nazarene*, that is, a contemptible person, and a man of no consideration: for we may find that because our Saviour was brought up at *Nazareth*, though he was born at *Bethlehem*, he was therefore looked upon as a person incapable of any thing that was great; *Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?* said *Nathanael* to *Philip (o)*; and the Pharisees to the officers whom they had sent to take *Jesus*, *Search and look, for out of Galilee ariseth no Prophet*, much less the great Prophet, the Messiah, who by way of eminence is so called. It is upon this account that he was called a *Galilean*, not only by the Heathens, but by his own Disciples too; for the word *Galilean* seems to have been a name for one of an impure extraction, because many of other nations dwelt among the Jews in *Galilee*. But I shall take notice of several other more important resemblances between them, and such as have relation to the ministry of *Moses* rather than his person, by referring all to his preaching, his miracles, his predictions, and some other heads of that nature.

First, then, *Jesus Christ*, that he might at first maintain the character of the Messiah, appears in the temple. *John the Baptist* had heard him called the Son of God, by a very peculiar witness, a voice from heaven. Wherefore we see that, at his first entry upon his ministry, he drives out those that profaned the house of God, whom he called his Father, with a scourge; and this he did at the feast of the passover, before the whole nation of the Jews (p).

Here is another character of the Messiah; he was to begin the exercise

(l) Gen. iii. 15.

(n) Dent. xviii. 15.

(p) John ii. 13, 14, 15, &c.

(m) Isai. vii. 14.

(o) John i. 46.

of his ministerial functions, in the tribes of *Naphthali* and *Zebulon*, according to the prophecy of *Isaiah* (q): and this our Saviour exactly accomplished by his beginning to preach at *Nazareth*, which was in the tribe of *Zebulon*; and he conversed much at *Capernaum*, which was in the tribe of *Naphthali*, according to the observation of the Evangelists.

But I proceed to consider some circumstances of his ministry. *Isaiah* had foretold that the Messiah was to preach the Gospel to the poor; which Jesus applies to himself in the synagogue at *Nazareth*, declaring that in his person that prophecy was fulfilled; viz. *The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, wherefore the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, &c.* (r).

The choice which he made of his Disciples from among the meanest of the people, and the basest of the crowd which followed him wherever he went, ought to pass for a sufficient accomplishment of this prophecy.

The Messiah, according to the representation which *Isaiah* gives us of him, was to publish the tidings of the remission of sins; and was not this that which Jesus Christ did, during the course of his ministry?

The Messiah was to preach the remission of sin, in such a manner, as that he might dry up the fountain of it, at the same time, in calling men to the study of sanctification: this was admirably performed by Jesus Christ; 1. In correcting those abuses which the *Jewish Doctors* had introduced into the law; 2. In declaring that the effect of sanctification was to be looked for in the heart, rather than in the eyes or hands.

One may see afterwards, 1. That he knew the heart of man; which proved that he made it. This he testifies upon several occasions, in the answers which he made to those that spoke to him, and indeed in all his discourses, which were suited to the dispositions of the heart of those to whom he addressed them.

2. That he made use of parables, which are moral lessons, very easy indeed, but withal fitter for the subject than fables, and more worthy of God; parables, also, which were so ordinary and familiar amongst the *Jews*, that we find most of them at this day in the writings of the *Jews*, though they apply them to no other use.

3. That he descended to particulars, without using any thing mean, which men are apt to do when they divide things minutely.

4. That he forgot no one precept of morality.

5. That he examined all the duties of religion, and made them infinitely recommendable by suggesting such excellent motives.

After all, we are to consider four things in the preaching of our Saviour, which will fully prove that he was the Messiah.

1. That his doctrine appeared to be wholly Divine: he had never been brought up at the feet of any Doctor; but had his breeding in a carpenter's shop.

2. That no crime was ever objected to him, notwithstanding that he upbraided the Pharisees with theirs; but he supported his doctrine by the holiness of his conversation.

3. That

(q) *Isai.* ix. 1.

(r) *Isai.* lxi. 1.

3. That he insensibly disposed the people to receive him as the Messiah, by the characters which God had given of him in the Prophets.

4. He prepared his Disciples and his auditors to expect that one day the *Gentiles* should enter into the church.

In short, can any thing be so surprising, as to see a man who had lived thirty years as the son of a carpenter, to declare himself all at once a Doctor, to preach publicly, to censure the Doctors of his nation, to speak of the law and prophets with more depth and authority than all that ever went before him? Who can, without surprise, conceive that a man of the lowest quality should, from a carpenter's shop, come and determine questions about the law, and tread under his feet the authority of all the great Rabbins every where, only by an *I say unto you*, so that none was able to contradict him! Certainly, when one sees our Saviour upon the mount explaining and defending the moral part of the law from the corruptions into which it was fallen, he appears not only as great as *Moses* on mount *Sinai*, but even as God himself, when he published his laws to that his ancient people.

Neither ought any one to have less admiration for that perfect innocence which shone through the whole course of his life. What crime had they to charge him with, when they put him to death, he who accused his enemies of so many? *Who of you, saith he, accuses me of sin?* We find him only accused of words ill understood, which they were resolved to misinterpret: his saying, *That if they destroyed that temple, he would rebuild it in three days*, was laid to his charge as a crime; and yet these words could not have been heightened into crimes, if they had been spoken in the same sense which they put upon them. This was an essential character of the Messiah, who was to be the restorer of holiness, according to the idea which the Prophets gave of him.

I should take notice afterwards that our Saviour, in his sermons, did by little and little dispose the minds of his auditors and Disciples to conceive and believe him to be the promised Messiah. The first act of his public ministry, was an effect of his zeal for the holiness of a temple consecrated to his Father: he drove the buyers and sellers out of the temple, at the feast of the passover, which action of his was a solemn profession that he was the Son of God. Soon after, at *Nazareth*, he applies to himself that prophecy of *Isaiah*, *The spirit of the Lord is upon me*, &c. He explains himself yet more distinctly in *Jerusalem*, at the second passover, which he celebrated during the time of his ministry, that they might understand that he was the Messiah, according to the account which the Evangelists give us; and he explains himself yet more particularly upon *John the Baptist's* message to him. By which means this truth became already so illustrious, that the multitudes would proclaim him King, that is, publicly own him for the Messiah, and obey him as their rightful Sovereign. And lastly, he explains himself in this matter by a question, when he asked his Disciples, *What censures were past upon him in Judea, and what they themselves thought of him (s)?*

In short, it is certain that Jesus prepared the minds of his Disciples to look for the calling of the *Gentiles*, which also was the character of the Messiah. *Jacob* had prophesied of old, *To him shall the gathering of*

(s) Matt. xvi.

the people be (1). But I shall pass by the oracles which foretel this matter. What signifies the history of the prodigal, unless it be the calling and the return of the *Gentiles*? the eldest son (the *Jew*) being extremely troubled at it. What means that saying of our Saviour, that he had other sheep, &c. or his prediction, that many should come from the east and west, and sit down with Abraham, when the children of the kingdom should be cast forth? I shall take notice, in another place, of the frequent repetition of such like oracles, and their exact accomplishment. These are sufficient at present to justify the solidity of this last reflexion, and the truth of this conclusion at the same time, that if one examines the life and preaching of our Saviour, he may find all those characters by which the promised Messiah might be known. Let us now proceed to the consideration of his miracles.

C H A P. X.

That the Miracles wrought by our SAVIOUR clearly prove that he is the MESSIAH.

AS the Messiah was to be very clearly distinguished from all others by his miracles, and as the Prophet *Isaiah*, chap. xxxv. sets down the power of working miracles as one of those characters by which he was to be known, so it is of great importance to us, to examine the miracles of our Saviour with great attention, whether they have the character of truth, and whether they come up to the idea which the Prophets give us of those wonders which the Messiah was to do.

The Evangelists, who tell us that he wrought almost an infinite number of them, have described more than thirty several sorts of them. He changed water into wine at the wedding at *Cana*; he healed the sick son of a courtier; he delivered one that was possessed in the synagogue at *Capernaum*; he healed St. *Peter's* mother-in-law; he caused a vast number of fish to be caught; he cured a leper with a word, and with a touch he healed one sick of the palsy; he cured a woman of an inveterate issue of blood, and raised the daughter of a ruler of the synagogue from the dead; he cured the impotent man at the pool of *Bethesda*; he cured him that had a withered hand; he delivered a possessed person that was blind and dumb; he recovered the centurion's servant, and raised to life the son of the widow of *Naim*.

Neither are these that follow any less considerable: he restores sight to two blind men, he casts forth a dumb devil, he assuages a tempest by his word, he delivers two possessed persons, and permits the devil to go into the herd of swine of the *Gadarens*; he feeds above five thousand persons with two loaves and five fishes; he walks upon the sea, and calmeth

a second tempest; he casts forth a devil from a daughter of a woman of *Canaan*, who was possessed; he cures one deaf and dumb; he feeds four thousand persons with seven loaves; he restores sight to a blind man of *Bethsaida*; he casts out a devil, after his Disciples had in vain attempted it; he restores sight to one born blind; he cures a crooked woman; he cures one of the dropsy on the sabbath day; he raises *Lazarus* from the grave, after he had been dead four days; he heals ten lepers afterwards; he restores sight to a blind man at his entering into *Jericho*; and cures the lame and blind in the temple itself.

There are several characters which assure us of the faithfulness of the Evangelists in these their relations: 1. They wrote these things to convert the *Jews* before the destruction of *Jerusalem*. 2. They marked the circumstances very exactly; and none could be ignorant of them, since they all went thrice a year up to *Jerusalem*. 3. The facts which they relate were lasting, and such as might be examined. 4. They speak of facts which they suppose that Jesus Christ was willing should be beyond all contest, that they might be better examined. 5. They speak of those facts which they maintain to be the accomplishment of the oracles concerning the Messiah whom the *Jews* expected.

But there are not fewer characters of truth in the miracles of our Saviour, to buoy them up. The first is, that most of the diseases which Jesus Christ cured, are described as absolutely incurable: this observation is of great moment, as well to discover to us the infinite power exerted by Jesus Christ, as to make known the extraordinary wisdom of the Apostles, who being men without learning, did notwithstanding set down the symptoms of the diseases which their master cured, far beyond what might be expected from their natural capacities.

The second reflexion belongs to the subjects upon whom these miracles were wrought; for we scarce find any of them, except his curing St. Peter's mother-in-law, to be wrought upon persons who had least relation to Jesus Christ: he heals the servant of the high-priest, the son of the ruler of a synagogue, the son of a *Roman* centurion, and several others.

A third reflexion may be drawn from the places where they were done, and from the witnesses that were present. In short, they were wrought in public places, in the midst of cities and synagogues; some in *Judea*, some in *Galilee*, some at *Jerusalem*, at *Naim*, *Sidon*, &c. they were submitted to the examination of the most implacable enemies of Jesus Christ, the people of the *Jews*, the *Samaritans*, and the *Gentiles*, who dwelt in *Palestina*.

One may add also, that these miracles were of very different kinds, wrought in several places, and with very considerable circumstances, at the most solemn feasts, the *passover* and *pentecost*.

One ought to consider also, that *Palestine* was full of those whom our Saviour had cured; and that all the *Jews* who came up three times in a year to *Jerusalem* could not but take notice of them.

One ought afterwards to observe, that Jesus Christ communicated to his Disciples the power of working miracles in the second year of his ministry, which none else had ever done.

And lastly, it must be observed, that these miracles were lasting; the three

three dead men, whom our Saviour raised to life again, who were very young, and who in all probability lived longer than decrepit old men, were in the sight of all *Judea*; and other sick and infirm persons, that he had healed, enjoyed life and health. 2. In short, the relation of Christ's miracles, which *Pilate* sent to *Tiberius*, sufficiently testifies that they were facts generally known; and, 3. That the certainty of them could so little be contested, that the *Jews* rather chose to accuse him of doing them by some magical secret, than to dispute the truth of them.

These reflexions sufficiently confirm the truth of the Evangelists relation, and of the miracles of Jesus Christ. To agree to what has been said, we need not refute the folly of those who have compared the miracles falsely attributed to *Apollonius Tyanæus*, with those of Jesus Christ. One hardly knows at this day whether ever there was such a man as *Apollonius*; whereas, ever since the Apostles, there have been Christians who have read the history of the miracles of Jesus Christ, and who have believed them after a due examination. Which of *Apollonius's* disciples was ever so bold as to say to Heathens, as *Tertullian* did in the second century, in his Apologetic, *Bring to us what possessed persons you please, and we will heal them in the name of Jesus Christ?*

But we ought also to add one thing more, That these miracles of Jesus Christ were exactly such as ought to have been made, to prove him to be the Messiah.

1. They were exactly such as *Isaiah* had foretold concerning the Messiah, chap. xxxv. as may be seen by comparing them with the text.

One ought only to observe, that this character is so peculiar, that it distinguishes the Messiah from all the other Prophets who went before him; for none of those to whom God had given power to work miracles, had either given sight to the blind, or power to the lame to walk.

2. They perfectly came up to the end of his ministry, as he was the Messiah; for it was his design to assure his Disciples of the immortality which he promised to them; and these cures, and these resurrections, which were wrought only by his word, were sufficient to convince them, as well of the sovereign power he had to execute his promises, as of his goodness, which was necessary to confirm the faith of his followers.

3. Some of his miracles were such as evinced his likeness to *Moses*: he changes water into wine at *Gana*; he feeds many thousands in the desert; he walks on the water, and makes one of his Disciples to walk with him; as *Moses* changed the waters to blood, and had caused manna to rain down upon the *Israelites*, and had opened the sea for their passage.

4. One ought to observe here, that if Jesus Christ's miracles were not like those of *Moses*, two only excepted, viz. his cursing of the barren fig-tree, and the drowning of the swine, this was to shew that he was not come, like *Moses*, to execute the judgments of God, but to exercise acts of grace and mercy; those now mentioned being sufficient to evince it was not for want of power.

If the Samaritan woman argued very rationally when she said concerning

cerning Christ, *When the Messiah shall come, will he do greater signs than these?* we may with more reason urge it now, since we know not only that Jesus Christ hath wrought such great miracles, but also conferred upon his Disciples a power of doing greater miracles than himself ever did.

C H A P. XI.

That the Predictions of our Lord JESUS CHRIST clearly prove him to be the MESSIAH.

ONE might have observed, that *John the Baptist* foretold many things concerning the person of our Lord, and the glory of his ministry; that *Simeon* foretold that he was to be *a sign which should be spoken against*: and it is known how exactly these things were fulfilled.

But it will be more for our purpose to examine those prophecies which were pronounced by Christ himself.

I pretend not to repeat them all here, nor to shew by how many ways, and upon how many occasions, Jesus Christ did reiterate them: this would take up too much time. I shall only set down the chief of them, and add some few reflexions.

When Jesus Christ calls the fishers to follow him, he foretels that he would make them teachers of the world; *I will make you, saith he, fishers of men.* He promises to make them famous by miracles, and to send them the gifts of his Holy Spirit, which the people of *Israel* had now for above 400 years been deprived of.

He promised to give them an authority over the consciences of men; so that what they should forbid us on earth, should be forbidden in heaven.

He foretels the calling of the *Gentiles* to his religion; *Many, saith he, shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven*; which is the more considerable, because he seemed himself unwilling to shew any favour to the *Gentiles*, whom he called *Dogs*, according to the language of the *Jews*.

He foretels the rejection of the *Jews*; *The children of the kingdom, saith he, shall be cast out into outer darkness.*

He foretels the persecutions which were to happen to his Disciples from the *Jews*, as well as from the *Roman* governors; *They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings, &c.*

He foretels, that notwithstanding all these persecutions, yet his church should not only continue, assuring them that *the gates of hell should never prevail against her*; but also should greatly flourish and increase, according to what *David* had foretold, *Psalms* cx. verse 3. alluding to the sudden fruitfulness which is caused by dew.

He above thirty times foretels his suffering and death.

He foretels his resurrection the third day.

He foretels that *Judas* should betray him, *St. Peter* deny him; that his Apostles should be scattered, as soon as they should see him smitten. He foretels the martyrdom of *St. Peter*, which he was to suffer for his sake; and to *St. John*, that he was to survive the destruction of *Jerusalem*. He foretels, that after his ascension to *heaven*, he should begin the call of all the nations of the earth; *When I shall be lifted up from the earth*, saith he, *I shall draw all men unto me*.

He often foretels the destruction of *Jerusalem* and the temple; *Behold*, saith he, *your house is left unto you desolate*.

He foretels that many false Messiahs should come after him, whom the *Jews* should receive, though they had rejected him as an impostor.

Several reflexions may be made upon these predictions of our Lord. In short, one may observe at first, that there are three sorts of them in the *New Testament*: some of them were fulfilled soon after they were pronounced; as those concerning the ass which he sent his Disciples for, those of his death and resurrection, of *St. Peter's* denying him, and the flight of his Apostles, &c.

The design of these was to establish the belief of those which were further off; which is the method of God himself, the Father of our Lord, in the *Old Testament*, as I have observed.

Some of them related to matters which were more remote; as the wars, for instance, which Christ foretold, the destruction of *Jerusalem*, and the dispersion of the *Jews*.

Lastly, there were some whose accomplishment was at a very great distance, after many ages, some of them reaching to the end of the world.

One sees plainly that this mixture of our Saviour's predictions, which are of so very different sorts, is of use to confirm the belief, and ascertain the truth of them, the exact fulfilling the first oracle making way for the belief, and expectation of the second, and so on, till all be fulfilled.

One may observe afterwards, that Jesus Christ and his Apostles, on whom he (according to his promise), after his ascension, poured forth the spirit of prophecy, did ordinarily follow the same notions and expressions which the Prophets of the *Old Testament* made use of.

Thus we find Jesus Christ makes use of *Daniel's* notions, where he speaks of the destruction of *Jerusalem*; thus we see that he imitates the most illustrious actions of the Prophets; and, to make his predictions the more observed, in accomplishing the prophecy of *Zachariah* on *Palm-Sunday*, in the midst of the acclamations of the people he weeps over *Jerusalem*, as if its destruction were already come. Thus Jesus Christ saith to *St. Peter*, *When thou shalt be old, another shall guide thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldst not (u)*; thus foretelling his death: thus he instructs him in the calling of the *Gentiles*, under a representation of all sorts of beasts, commanding him also, even as to the impure animals, *Slay and eat*. All the *Revelations* are full of such prophetic ideas, taken from the *Old Testament*, from *Genesis*, *Isaiah*, *Ezekiel*, *Zachariah*, &c.

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(v) Joh. xxi. 18.

But here are other reflexions of as great importance as the former.

The first is, That the greatest part of these predictions are nothing but a continuance and more distinct explication of the oracles of the *Old Testament*, concerning the sufferings of the Messiah, the calling of the *Gentiles*, the destruction of the commonwealth of the *Jews*; and besides, they are continued to the last day of the world, which is the end of prophecy.

The second is, That these predictions had not the least probability upon which they might rationally have been grounded. What likelihood was there, that Jesus Christ should be crucified, he who raised the dead, who commanded the sea and winds, he whom they would have taken by force to make him their king? What likelihood was there, that the Apostles, a company of poor miserable *Jews*, should bring over the *Gentiles* to the religion of a man who was accursed by the synagogue of the *Jews*, and crucified like a slave by the authority of the *Roman* magistrate? What probability was there of the destruction of *Jerusalem*, whilst the *Jews*, accustomed to the *Roman* yoke, made it their business to avoid all manner of occasions that might stir up the indignation of their masters against them? *It is expedient*, say they, *rather that one man perish* (meaning Jesus) *than to hazard the welfare of the whole nation*.

The third is, That these oracles were written by the Apostles, not only amongst discourses of another nature, but also linked together in such a chain, that their connexion will not permit us to believe that they were contrived after the matters which they relate to were past; and also that they are constantly related by three Evangelists, long time before the things came to pass, St. *John* being the only witness of the destruction of *Jerusalem*.

The fourth is, That these oracles gave the Apostles as much grounds to expect calamities and violent deaths, as to Jesus Christ himself; so that there is no pretence of doubting that they were not faithfully recorded by the Evangelists; and that therefore, seeing the accomplishment has exactly answered to the oracle, we ought to look upon them as Divine oracles.

I confess that these oracles, no more than the books of the *New Testament*, were ever committed to the public custody of the *Jews*, as formerly the oracles of the Prophets of old were; but this cannot really diminish their authority.

I will not observe at present, that because the temple was to be burnt, it was not proper to depose them there; and it was for this reason God thought fit to cause the oracles of the *Old Testament* to be translated long before.

Nor yet, that it was very proper that these predictions, as well as the books of the *New Testament*, should be put into the hands of the *Gentiles*, who thenceforward were to be the people of God, and his temple.

But this I observe, that nothing can be imagined more solemn than these prophecies of our Saviour and his Disciples, as well as never any thing was more exactly fulfilled.

Jesus Christ was born at *Bethlehem*, according to the oracles. Now, as no man is master of the place of his birth, so it is plain that here is

no room left for imposture: neither is a man any more the master of his death; wherefore, to give a certain character to his prophecy, he foretells his dying at *Jerusalem*; which accordingly was accomplished in all its circumstances. Can any thing be more exact?

But one may say, that it was easy for the Disciples to forge predictions suitable to the event, in like manner as *Virgil* hath done, in the sixth of his *Æneids*, of *Marcellus*. One may indeed contrive an imposture which shall be possible, and which may answer to some few oracles; but I shall hereafter shew the folly of that thought, when I come to prove the faithfulness of the Apostles and Evangelists.

But can we conceive such a suspicion concerning the conversion of the *Gentiles*, the ruin of Paganism, the victory of Christianity after ten persecutions? It is now above 1600 years that the Christian Religion subsists; whereas, who could have assured the Disciples of Jesus Christ, that their doctrine would have had so much as one or two followers after their death? The greatest empires, that of the *Chaldeans*, of the *Persians*, of the *Grecians*, and that of the *Romans*, have been overturned; and none of them singly have been of so long continuance as the kingdom of Jesus Christ, which nevertheless was attacked by all that was great and powerful in the world. Who sees not that this is the empire whereof *Daniel* speaks in the seventh of his Revelations, *which was never to have end*.

Jesus Christ foretold, as it is set down by his Disciples, according to the prophecy of *Daniel*, that the temple of *Jerusalem* should be destroyed, and never built again: who could tell the Apostles, if they had forged this oracle themselves, that the endeavours of *Julian* to confound this prophecy, when he began to rebuild the temple, would be in vain, as indeed they proved by an effect of the Divine vengeance against the *Jews*, who were engaged in the rebuilding of it, under the authority of that emperor? (x)

Indeed, if one reflects on the oracles of Jesus Christ, one shall find them a thousand times more known than those of the *Jews*.

1. The greatest part of them were penned at one and the same time.
2. They were writ by several authors, who lived in different places.
3. They were read over the whole earth every Lord's day: they have been explained and commented upon soon after, every one endeavouring to take notice of their accomplishment.
4. They have been alledged in disputes against *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and have served for a foundation to the faith of the Christian church, whose teachers have made it their business to shew their uniformity with the oracles of the *Old Testament*, which are in the hands of the *Jews*, though the *Jews* have always considered the Christians as their most mortal enemies.

But one may also find that these oracles being for the most part much more clear and express, their accomplishment also hath been so much the more easily discernible: from whence it evidently follows, that Jesus Christ ought to be acknowledged as the Prophet that was like unto Moses, as is mentioned in the eighteenth of *Deuteronomy*, that is indeed the true *Messiah*.

C H A P. XII.

That JESUS CHRIST died precisely in the same Manner as it was foretold that the MESSIAH should die.

I HAVE shewed, in my third part, that God had given to his church several oracles to explain distinctly this great truth concerning the Messiah.

1. He had set this up for a rule by *Moses*, *Cursed is he that hangeth on a tree.*

2. He had proposed by *David* the idea of the Messiah, as having his hands and feet pierced; the *Gentiles* and *Jews* uniting themselves against him.

3. He had foretold by *Isaiah*, that the Messiah was to be accounted a malefactor, and put to death.

4. He had repeated the same ideas by the Prophet *Zechariah*, who describes the manner of his being pierced, which has a natural reference to the notion of crucifixion.

I have also set down the reasons for which God separated the several parts of those prophetical descriptions of so surprising an event: the difficulty there was on the one hand to make these ideas to be received, which seem full of contradictions, the Messiah having been at first set forth as the Fountain of Blessing; and, on the other hand, their seeming incompatibility with the glory which God had promised to the Messiah, and by him to the *Israelites*.

And at last, I have shewed that these oracles do exactly and clearly describe the things which were to happen to the Messiah; which was to be so, because of the nature of those events, which were so strange, and at such a distance from the common ideas which men have, for the most part, of such things.

Our business therefore only is to consider at present, whether indeed Jesus Christ died in the same manner as the Prophets had foretold that the Messiah should.

This character is a very illustrious one, to confirm that Jesus Christ is the Messiah; for it is well known that a prisoner is no longer master of the things that happen to him, neither of the kind of his death, nor of the manner of his burial.

In short, nothing can be imagined more foolish than to suppose that the Disciples of Jesus Christ should apply to their master, that he might pass for the Messiah, such oracles as had not usually been applied to the Messiah by the *Jews*, amongst whom they lived, and whom they endeavoured to dispose for the receiving of Jesus Christ as the promised Messiah.

Now we cannot conceive any thing more exact than the agreement which we find between the prophecies and the event.

1. When Jesus Christ, by his triumphant entry into *Jerusalem*, riding on an ass, had put his Disciples in mind of one passage in *Zachary*, he obliged them also to cast their eyes upon another, when he foretold his death,

death, and their flight, as the accomplishment of this oracle; *I will smite the shepherd, and the flock shall be scattered*, Zach. xiii. 7. (y).

2. He was beset with a band of Roman soldiers, and the servants of the principal men amongst the Jews, who apprehended him, under the conduct of Judas; which exactly answers, first, to the description which we find *Psalms* xxii. *Dogs*, that is Heathens, whom the Jews treated as such, and *strong Bulls*, that is Jews, represented by clean Beasts, *have beset me round*; and secondly, to that other prophecy, *He that eats bread with me hath lift up his heel against me*.

3. He offers himself freely to death, according to that of *Isaiah*, that he gave his soul an offering for sin. This appears, not only by his going into the garden, where he knew that he should be taken, but also by his telling the soldiers that he was the man they looked for. He opposed St. Peter's attempts towards his rescue, and declares that he did not fly from death, but was willing to satisfy the intent of the prophecies.

4. He is forsaken by his Disciples, as he himself had testified of it as foretold by the Prophets, Zach. xiii. 7.

5. He is struck on the face before Annas, as *Jeremiah* had foretold, *Lament.* iii. 30. *He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him*.

6. He appears before Caiaphas, surrounded by every thing that was great amongst the Jews, whether lawyers or churchmen, according to *Psalms* ii.

7. He is silent before his unjust judges, and neglects to answer the accusations which the false witnesses deposed against him, according to the prophecy of *Isaiah*, *As a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth*, *Isaiah* liii. 7. and the description which *David* gives of him, *Psalms* xxxi. and xxxix.

8. They opened their mouths against him, in accusing him of blasphemy, as *David* had figuratively expressed it, *Psalms* xxii. 13.

9. They spit in his face, they buffeted and abused him the whole night, according to that oracle of *Isaiah*, xlix. 6.

10. When Judas saw that Jesus Christ was delivered to Pilate by the Jews, who demanded his crucifixion, he returned the thirty pieces of silver, wherewith they purchased the Potters field, afterwards called the Field of Blood, and set apart by the Jews for the burial of strangers, as was foretold by *Zechariah*, xi. 12. and by *Jeremiah*, xxxii. 25.

11. He is accused before Pilate, and brought before Herod, without justifying himself of the crimes laid to his charge, as it is *Psalms* xxxviii. and xxvii. 12.

12. Pilate and Herod agree in conspiring the death of Jesus Christ, according to the description of *Psalms* ii.

13. Pilate desiring to save Jesus, the Jews demand Barabbas might be released, and Jesus punished, as *David* had foretold, *Psalms* xxii. 14.

14. Jesus Christ was scourged by Pilate's order, which was foretold, *Psalms* xxxviii. and lxix. *Isaiah* liii. ver. 5, and chap. lxiii.

15. He is brought forth by Pilate to the people with an *Ecce Homo*, Behold the Man, which was foretold by *Isaiah*: *When we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him; he is despised and rejected of men: we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted*.

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(y) Matth. xxvi. 31.

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16. He is afterwards delivered to the soldiers, who, before they crucified him, insulted over him with a thousand indignities, and scourged him again, according to the prophecies so often before alledged.

17. They crucify him with two robbers, which answers to that prophecy, *Isaiab liii. 12. He was numbered with transgressors.*

18. They give him gall and vinegar to drink, as was foretold *Psaln lxix.*

19. They pierce his hands and feet in nailing him to the cross, which answers to *Psaln xxii. 17, 18.*

20. They part his garments, which is represented in the same *Psaln*, verse 19. and cast lots on his vesture, according to the same *Psaln*, in the very same place.

21. He suffers a thousand reproaches upon the cross, according to what we find *Psaln xxii. verse 8. and Psalm lxix. verse 8, 10.*

22. And in particular, the *Jews* and *Scribes* reproach him in the very words of *Psaln xxii. verse 8.*

23. Jesus Christ cries out, applying to himself the beginning of *Psaln xxii. My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?* as he had before applied to himself the prophecy concerning the Messiah in the third of *Daniel.*

24. He commends his soul into the hands of God, in the very words which we read *Psaln xvi.*

These are the principal circumstances of the death of Jesus Christ, which one sees to be exactly agreeable to the prophecies going before concerning them: let us now consider those which followed his death, which we shall not find to be less particular.

1. The bones of Jesus Christ were not broken, as those of the two thieves; which one may see foretold, *Psaln xxxiv. verse 21.*

2. They opened his side with a spear, according to the idea of *Zechariab, chap. x. verse 12. They shall look upon him whom they have pierced.*

3. His body is buried by *Joseph of Arimathea*, in a new sepulchre; which answers to the prophecy of *Isaiab, chap. liii.*

These remarks do, in my judgment, clearly prove, that in the death of Christ all the characters by which the Prophets have distinguished the death of the Messiah, are actually found.

But, that we may yet be more sensible how justly these oracles are applied to Jesus Christ, here are some reflexions upon the application which the Apostles make of these particular facts which happened to Christ, to those oracles which I have now mentioned.

The first is, That the relation of these facts is joined with an account of the weakness whereinto they all fell: they relate their own flight, and forsaking their master, with *St. Peter's* denying of him; whilst they set down the courage of those women, and that entire love which they shewed to the person of Jesus.

The second is, That the account of the accomplishment of these ancient oracles is interwoven with the accomplishment of those which were uttered by Jesus Christ, which alone are sufficient to make good his claim.

The third is, That our Saviour did never on any occasion more openly stand to his pretension of being the Messiah, than when he applied to himself

himself those oracles which by their public consent were referred to the Messiah, which the *Jews* at that time more obstinately contested than ever.

The fourth is, That there never was a more exact description of all circumstances which might assure us of the truth of any relation, than that which the Evangelists have given us of the death of Jesus Christ, in which we find the places, the time, the persons, their discourses, and other things of that nature, set down with extreme care.

The fifth is, That as this fact, with all its circumstances, is the most exactly described of any thing that ever was, so it was a matter concerning which it was scarce possible to impose upon any one. All was done in the face of the whole nation, who were met together at their most solemn festival: all was done in the presence of the sovereign Heathen magistrate, of the council of the *Jews*, of *Herod*, and of those who followed him to *Jerusalem*.

The sixth is, That we find an account of some miracles interwoven with this relation of the Evangelists concerning the death of Christ; and those miracles as public, and as little subject to suspicion, as the death itself of Jesus Christ, if we take the pains to examine them.

They who come to take Jesus, fall down backward to the ground; Jesus Christ restores the ear of the high priest's servant, which was cut off: there was darkness over all the land, from nine o'clock in the morning till noon; the vail of the temple is rent. These are miraculous actions, and such as the *Jews* might easily have refuted, wheresoever they had been proposed, if the truth of them had not been beyond all question.

From all these remarks it evidently follows, That it is impossible to dispute the application which the Apostles make of these oracles, which are so particular, to the person of Jesus Christ, as the true Messiah: we find every part of their relation exactly answering to the prophecies. How then can any one doubt of their being fulfilled in him? especially seeing it is evident, by so many other proofs, that he was indeed the Messiah, and that God has been pleased so many other ways to confirm the same truth.

C H A P. XIII.

That JESUS CHRIST was raised again the third Day, according to the PROPHETS, and afterwards ascended into Heaven.

HAVING shewed, in the foregoing Chapter, that Jesus Christ was crucified under *Pontius Pilate*, for maintaining that he was the promised Messiah; I am now to shew, that, according to the prophecies set down in my third part, he rose again the third day, and afterwards ascended into heaven. As these two facts are the most important

portant of all that are contained in the Gospel; because, if they be denied, all the Divine worship given to Jesus Christ, by the Apostles, and a great number of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, who received him for their master in matters of religion, is absolutely unlawful; so we ought solidly to prove, that they are indisputably true. Of which we shall be fully convinced, by making some observations upon the relation which the Evangelists give us concerning them; and we shall easily find therein all the characters of truth.

There is no necessity of observing, that a resurrection from the dead is a fact which can hardly be believed; and that, though the *Jews* did not all of them look upon it is an impossible thing, yet there were *Sadducees* amongst them, whose doctrine was publicly taught. It is certain that though the Disciples had seen Jesus Christ raising three persons from the dead, and amongst others *Lazarus*, a little before his death, yet we find that they were not thereby more disposed to believe that Christ was to rise from the dead.

In short, though the Evangelists tell us, that Jesus Christ himself had foretold that he was to rise again the third day, which was a thing so commonly known, that the priests, to elude the prophecy, desired of *Pilate*, that a guard might be set on Jesus's grave; yet they expressly tell us, that the Disciples, none excepted, were in such a consternation at the death of Jesus Christ, that they had entirely lost the hopes of seeing the accomplishment of that prophecy. Some pious women, who had accompanied him to the cross, and were desirous to shew some marks of their veneration after his death, came indeed to his sepulchre, but with spices to embalm his dead body; so far were they from expecting to find him risen from the dead. Though these holy women were convinced of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, by the apparition of an angel, by the discourse of our Saviour himself, and by the repetition of his order, that they should go to *Galilee*, where they should see him, yet the relation which they give of these things is accounted fabulous; so that two only of all the Apostles had the curiosity to go to the grave, and inform themselves. Here is a great unbelief amongst the Apostles, which was to be cured: this was a condition wholly inconsistent, if we suppose them impostors, and that they intended to impose upon the world.

A second thing we may observe is, That as the incredulity of our Saviour's own Disciples was extraordinary, so we cannot imagine any more efficacious means than were employed to overcome this their doubtfulness. If one joins the relations of the Evangelists together, one may find several degrees of evidence in those proofs which confirm the truth of the resurrection of our Saviour.

The first is, the manner of their being informed of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Angels at first declare his resurrection to some women; Jesus Christ afterwards appears to *Mary Magdalen*, all alone; afterwards he appears only to two of his Disciples, then to *St. Peter*; afterwards he appears to seven of them at once; then, to all his Disciples, except *Thomas*; and soon after, to the eleven, *Thomas being one of them*. After all this, he appears to a greater number of his followers; till at last, having been several times seen of them all, he appears to them all assembled together, and is taken up into heaven in their sight. It is evident, that

as they were informed of this truth one after another, so they were more obliged to examine the fact more attentively when Jesus Christ appeared to them.

The second degree has relation to those marks and characters by which they were assured that it was Jesus Christ himself. The Angels repeat to the women the command which Jesus Christ, before his death, had given to his Disciples, to go into *Galilee*; Jesus Christ, appearing to *Mary Magdalen*, repeats the same to her, and gives her a particular commission for St. *Peter*, to comfort him in his affliction, for having denied his master. Appearing to his Disciples, as they went to *Emmaus*, he refers them to the prophecies which spoke of his death and resurrection; and moreover, when he broke bread with them, they hear the same prayers which he ordinarily used at the blessing of it. He appears to them the same day the fifth time, and shews them his feet and his hands; he repeats the grant of the authority which the Father had given him; he breathes upon them, saying, *Receive the Holy Ghost*; a week after, he lets *Thomas* touch him; he appears afterwards to seven of his Apostles upon the lake of *Tiberias*, where he confirms St. *Peter* in his charge, from which his denying of Christ might seem to have excluded him, after he had wrought a miracle in the draught of the fishes, which was like some miracles which he had wrought before his death. Afterwards, he appears upon the same mountain in *Galilee*, where, in all probability, he had been transfigured before, and is there seen of five hundred of his Disciples at once. And last of all, he appears to them at *Jerusalem*, after their return from *Galilee*; and from thence goes with them to *Bethany*, where, after he had told them of the absolute power which God had given them, he commands them to go and baptize in his name, he foretels the miracles which they should work, and the gifts which they should receive at *Jerusalem*. All these so very different circumstances were only designed to assure their eyes, their hands, their minds, their consciences, that was the same Jesus whom they had always followed.

It is worth our taking notice of the diversity of these circumstances, for the certainty of this fact, which absolutely prevent all pretences of doubtfulness. Jesus Christ appears ten several times after his death: he appears five times on the very day of his resurrection; he appears at several hours, to different persons, in several places, but always to persons to whom he was familiarly known, to those who were not at all credulous. The first news they had of his resurrection seemed only to raise their scruples, if the testimony of their senses, which saw him and touched him, had not removed all suspicions. Jesus Christ appears to them in places where he had wrought many miracles, and where he had often before conversed with them.

But one may make another more important reflexion, upon the time and the day wherein our Saviour rose again. Of the ten several times in which he appeared to his Disciples, he appeared five times on the day of his resurrection; he appeared to them eight days after; and after that, the eighth day, which he signalized by his frequent appearing to his Disciples, was consecrated to celebrate the memory of this event every week: one finds certain tokens hereof in the writings of the Apostles; and it is known that all Christians after them did inviolably observe this law.

Now,

Now, let any one consider, whether it would have been possible to introduce this custom in the time of the Apostles, if the resurrection of Christ had not been a fact confessed on all hands. Can any one conceive, that the Apostles and their Disciples, who were witnesses of the death of Jesus Christ, and who celebrated the memory thereof by a sacrament, could have been so stupid as to establish a custom which would put people upon examining the fact, and have convinced them in a little time, since none of those that followed them would have submitted to this practice, if they had not been convinced by their eyes, and their other senses, and by a thousand other proofs, of the truth of so capital a fact, which was so much disputed by the *Jews*, of which they were obliged to make a solemn commemoration two and fifty times every year, as long as they lived?

Let us add to this remark, which we have elsewhere urged, with reference to the creation, another reflexion upon a fact which the Evangelists tell us: they tell us, that though the resurrection of Christ was accompanied with very peculiar circumstances, sufficient to convince both *Jews* and *Gentiles* of the truth of it, being ushered in with an earthquake, with apparitions of angels to the soldiers that guarded the sepulchre of Jesus, and were frightened thereby, yet the council of the *Jews* contrived, with the soldiers, a most impudent lie to outface it; and accordingly the soldiers, coming before *Pilate*, tell him that the Disciples had stolen away the body of Jesus whilst they slept; and his Disciples tell us, that, since, this hath been the common opinion of the *Jews*.

I will not so much as take notice here of the palpable falsity of this deposition; for, if the soldiers were asleep, how could they depose concerning a fact which was done at that time? if they were not asleep, why did not they hinder the Disciples from taking the body of their master away? How could they affirm that thieves had taken him away, when the linen clothes wherein his body was shrouded being left in the grave, and the napkin that was about his head being folded up in a place by itself, so absolutely evince that he was not taken away by persons that were in fear of a surprize? What probability is there, in short, to suspect that his Disciples, who forsook Jesus Christ whilst he was yet alive, who fled from him at that time, should undertake such a hazardous attempt, to have his body only?

Neither will I insist upon a representation of the Apostle's sincerity, which made them give us in their histories a plain account of the report which was spread against the belief of the resurrection of Jesus, before ever that the Disciples had attested the same.

But I observe another very particular character in their relation, which is, that it was impossible for them to establish this fact of the resurrection, without accusing thereby the whole council of the *Jews*, of the most shameful and crying imposture that ever was: to write a thing of this nature against the heads of that religion, was to sacrifice themselves to the hatred of the public, and to expose themselves to inevitable ruin. In short, let us imagine whether, after a charge of this nature, it was easy for the Apostles to publish their books, and preach publicly that Jesus Christ was risen from the dead? And yet this was what they did with a surprising diligence, when they inserted this terrible accusation into

into their books and sermons; which alone is sufficient to demonstrate that they were infinitely convinced of the resurrection, and also in a condition to convince all gainfayers, as we shall shew hereafter.

One may add to this proof the conversion of *St. Paul*, and the care which he afterwards took to confirm the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. He was a declared enemy of Jesus Christ, and of the Christian religion; and yet, soon after the death of Christ, he preaches him up for the Messiah. How came this sudden change? He asserts that he had seen in heaven this Jesus who was risen from the dead, and received from him the Apostleship; accordingly we find him preaching by these orders, without any communication had with the first Disciples of Jesus Christ. He relates these matters in a manner so little affected to advance his ministry in the minds of the *Galatians*, who preferred *St. Peter* and the other Apostles before him, that there is no ground left to doubt of them.

One ought to make a like reflexion upon the conversion of *Cornelius* the centurion: he was a proselyte, that is, a *Gentile* by birth, but a *Jew* by profession; and by the employment he was in, he had occasion of being more particularly informed of the deposition of the soldiers, who probably were not unknown to him, for he was in the garrison at *Cæsarea*, which was not far from *Jerusalem*. Yet, however, this *Cornelius*, after he had a vision which commanded him to send to *Joppa*, a place made famous, because *Jonah* the Prophet set sail from thence, who was a type of the Messiah in his death and resurrection; this *Cornelius*, I say, embraced the Christian religion, becomes the first bishop of *Cæsarea*, and died a martyr for the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The great affection which *St. Luke* had for *St. Paul*, confirms the same truth. *St. Luke* had never seen our Saviour; he was born at *Antioch*, where in all probability he exercised his profession of physic; yet he was converted to Christianity, and followed *St. Paul* in all places, and writ the history of his miracles and preaching. Who doubts but that the reason hereof was, because he had seen the dead whom Christ had raised to life, and had seen *St. Paul*, whom Jesus Christ had dignified with the Apostleship, raise others also from the dead?

It is certain that those who were first convinced by the relation of the Apostles, must needs have had very evident proofs of the truth of it.

The *Jews* had *Sadducees* amongst them, who denied the possibility of the resurrection in general; the council of the *Jews* especially had made it their business to decry the conduct, the doctrine, and the miracles of Jesus Christ, and in particular to make the belief of his resurrection suspected; and so much the more, because Jesus Christ had foretold it, and his Apostles maintained that it was come to pass accordingly. If, in opposition to these strong prejudices, there had only been the deposition of two or three persons to confirm this fact, there would have been reason to doubt of it; but we find that this thing, which of itself seems hard to be believed, and was otherwise so much contested, is, 1. Proved by ten several apparitions; 2. It is attested by above five hundred Disciples; 3. It was publicly preached by the Disciples of Christ at *Jerusalem* itself, and throughout all *Judæa*, where it was most of all disputed; 4. It was received by the very enemies of Jesus Christ, as *St. Paul* and *Cornelius*,

nelius, and by thousands of those who, having demanded his death, were converted by the preaching of the Apostles; 5. It was confirmed by the martyrdom of the greatest part of them; and 6. It was not only authorised by the presence of the three persons whom Christ had raised to life, and who lived, one of them at *Bethany*, fifteen furlongs from *Jerusalem*, where Jesus ascended to heaven, another at *Naim*, &c. but it was further verified by several resurrections wrought by the Apostles, to whom Christ had vouchsafed that astonishing power.

It was also a very considerable thing, that the commonwealth of the *Jews* continued near forty years after the time that the Apostles undertook openly to preach up the resurrection of Jesus Christ as the capital article of their religion; and yet in all that time it was never opposed by any public writing either of the *Jews* or *Gentiles*. If the *Jews*, in their unjust intrigues against Jesus Christ and his religion, endeavoured to abuse the world, in this matter, with calumniating stories, neither have the Apostles been wanting to accuse the principal men of their nation of imposture; and they have despised their most cruel of the punishments, to maintain the justice of their charge; and yet none of them would undertake to justify the calumnies of their council, though they saw Christianity spreading itself not only over all *Judea*, but in all parts of the world. To speak of it as it is, this conduct of theirs was a manifest betraying of their cause, or rather an open acknowledgment that what they had published against the innocency of the Disciples, and the truth of the resurrection of Jesus, was without all ground.

I foresee only one probable difficulty which can be opposed to the solidity of these reflexions. A *Jew* may demand, why Jesus Christ after his resurrection did not converse as openly amongst the *Jews* as before, that so he might have been known by those who had crucified him, which would have put the truth of the resurrection out of doubt?

But, to speak truth, this objection is not reasonable: for, 1. Jesus Christ had threatened the unbelieving *Jews*, they should see him no more; and he ought to make good his threatening. 2. Who sees not that they would have looked upon his appearing amongst them as a fantastic apparition, after they had seen him work so many miracles, and had attributed them to the devil? 3. I say, that such an apparition was not agreeable to our Saviour's doctrine in the parable of the rich man: *They have Moses and the Prophets; if they hear not them, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead* (x). 4. Jesus Christ having for the most part converted in *Galilee* at *Nazareth* and *Capernaum*, it was to the *Galileans* and his Disciples that he was chiefly to shew himself, to be acknowledged by them, as being the persons who were particularly to bear witness of this truth. After so strong a presumption as the governors of that people had of Christ's resurrection, founded upon the earthquake which accompanied it, and upon the deposition of the soldiers to whom the Angels had appeared, had not they all the reason in the world to believe the testimony of the Apostles concerning this truth, which they heard several times attested by them in full council, and saw confirmed by miraculous cures which they could not question in the least?

Lastly, Is not this objection the most ridiculous thing in the world?

For,

For, let us suppose that these considerations are not strong enough to justify our Saviour's conduct when he gave these proofs of his resurrection; doth it follow, because he did not make choice of means (in order to persuade the *Jews*) which they preferred before others used by him, without any solid reason, that therefore we must reject the deposition of so many witnesses who unanimously attest it? Since Jesus Christ had raised three persons to life again, which then lived in *Judea*; since *Jerusalem* had continued forty years after the death of Christ; since sixty solemn feasts were celebrated in that time, where all the *Jews* had an occasion to examine the truth of these facts, and the truth or falsity of the accusation charged upon the Apostles by the council of the *Jews*; and that multitudes of *Jews* and *Gentiles* were converted at the preaching of the Apostles, who reduced all to this question of the fact of the resurrection of our Saviour; is not this an invincible proof against all the accusations and suspicions of the Synagogue?

Forasmuch as the witnesses who maintain the resurrection of Christ, are the very same that attest his ascension into heaven, and that they assert it with the same proofs, and the same zeal, the reflexions here set down may serve for that also; and the rather, because I am next to consider the sending of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, which is an undeniable proof, both of the resurrection of Christ and his ascension; and that these very gifts of the Holy Spirit enabled the *Jews* to write, preach, and publish throughout all the world, the truths of that Christianity which we now profess.

C H A P. XIV.

That JESUS CHRIST sent to his Apostles, and to the Primitive Christians, the miraculous Gifts of his HOLY SPIRIT, as he had promised in the Ancient Prophecies.

I HAVE shewn that the prophecies of the *Old Testament* speak very plainly of this sending of the Spirit, as a preliminary to the calling of the *Gentiles*, which was the great design of God. The Prophet *Joel* speaks of it as such, and makes this wonder to precede the destruction of *Jerusalem*, as *St. Peter* observes in the second of the *Acts*. *Isaiah* speaks very particularly of it as such, in the eleventh chapter of his prophecy, where he sufficiently intimates that the spirit of prophecy should from thenceforward so rest upon Jesus Christ, that it would not be found any longer among the *Jews*, whose city and temple should be destroyed.

At present my business is to shew that this thing has been exactly fulfilled, according to the design which God had laid down in the Prophets. To be convinced of this, we need only make some reflexions upon the relation which *St. Luke* gives us of it in the *Acts*.

He

He tells us therefore, that fifty days only after the death of Jesus Christ, the Apostles having continued at *Jerusalem*, and being assembled there, they received the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, that is, the power of speaking all sorts of languages, to make them fit to preach the Gospel to all nations, and to explain the most sublime mysteries of our Saviour's religion.

Every thing is considerable in this relation of *St. Luke*: 1. That he relates this fact as happening fifty days only after the Jewish passover, when Christ was crucified; the whole nation of the *Jews* having been witnesses of his death. 2. That he relates it as happening in the same city where Jesus Christ was condemned, that the same multitude who after fifty days were again assembled there at this feast, might be witnesses of this miraculous event. In short, it plainly appears that this new law from mount *Sion*, was solemnly promulged in the presence of all the *Jews*, who were assembled from all parts of the world; as the old law was, when all the people assisted at the foot of mount *Sinai*. 3. That these gifts were granted to all the Disciples of our Saviour: gifts which till that time had been wholly unheard of, and whereof some part only had been granted for some Prophets, and to some Priests, and of which none had been made partakers since the time of *Malachi*; God having so ordered it, that the desires of the *Jews* might be the more inflamed for the Messiah's coming, as also that upon his coming he might the more easily be discerned. 4. That this was a fact openly known amongst the *Jews*, and differently interpreted by them; some saying, *They were full of new wine*. 5. That the Apostles asserted, by the mouth of *St. Peter*, that this was an accomplishment of the ancient oracles, as well as of the promises of Jesus Christ. 6. That they declared that the resurrection of Jesus Christ, his ascension into heaven, and this miraculous donative, had been foretold by *David* and *Joel*. It is certainly therefore very natural to make these following reflexions upon the relation of so considerable an event.

The first will confirm the truth of this miraculous fact, if we consider that it is absurd to suppose that *St. Luke*, a wise man, should be so rash as to relate a matter of this nature, if he had not been fully convinced of it, and if it had not been an easy thing to have convinced his readers thereof also; nothing more being required for their conviction, but the presence of one of those first Christians, and to make a trial of this supernatural virtue bestowed on them, for which there were frequent occasions.

2. We must observe that this relation of *St. Luke* is, as it were, the foundation which he lays down, to make his book of the *Acts* to appear just and reasonable, and to justify the Apostles conduct in preaching the Gospel to the *Gentiles*, not only contrary to the opinion of the *Jews*, who looked upon them as wholly excluded from the privileges of the covenant; but also contrary to the seeming maxim of Jesus Christ, who acted only as the minister of circumcision; and contrary to the pretensions of many Christians, who, after the mission of the Holy Ghost, took it very ill that *St. Peter* had preached to the *Gentiles*.

3. *St. Luke* supposes that this fact came to pass in such a manner, that it was followed by consequences as illustrious as they were incredible. Twelve poor fishermen undertook to go and preach to all the world, that

that their master, who fifty days before was crucified at *Jerusalem*, at the prosecution of the whole synagogue, and by order of one of the magistrates of the *Roman* empire, was not only living, not only ascended into heaven, but that he also had given them the power of speaking all sorts of languages, of curing all diseases, and even of raising the dead.

4. They go yet further; they boldly maintain that Jesus Christ had given them a privilege of communicating the same power to all those who would believe that he was the promised Messiah; and this, without any other mystery but the bare laying-on of their hands, after they had received them by baptism into the profession of Christianity.

Nothing could have been more easy than to convince them of the contrary, unless they had confirmed the truth of their assertion by the miraculous consequences of that first miracle. The fact was publicly acknowledged: *Simon Magus* is convinced thereof; and he who had made himself famous by his forceries, becomes a Disciple. *St. Luke*, in a history of the actions of thirty years, relates the continual miracles wrought by the Apostles, and particularly by *St. Paul*, whom he constantly followed.

It seems to me, that if one considers the history itself, and the person who made it, it will appear to be a true and faithful relation; however, there are other testimonies which invincibly establish the same truth.

1. The Gospel was, in effect, established in most of the provinces and great cities of the *Roman* empire. *St. Paul* writes to the Christians of *Thessalonica*, *Corinth*, and *Ephesus*, to the *Galatians*, *Colossians*, &c. which is an evident argument that there were Christians every where, that is, Disciples of these twelve fishermen, who understood nothing but their native *Syriac* language. How then were all these nations converted, without supposing the truth of the miracle at the *Pentecost*?

2. The Apostles speak to them of these miraculous gifts as of a common thing; *St. Paul* employing some part of his first epistle to the *Corinthians*, to regulate those disorders which arose in the church, by reason of the abuse of those gifts. *St. James* speaks of the power that the priests had to cure the sick; and *St. Paul* wishes for an opportunity of going to *Rome*, to communicate those gifts to the *Romans*.

3. They take occasion to raise the dignity of the Gospel above that of the law, in calling it the ministry of the Spirit, in opposition to the letter of the law, notwithstanding the tables of the law had been given to *Moses* in so very illustrious a manner.

It is of great moment here to consider three things, which alone are sufficient to confirm the truth of the Christian religion.

The first is, That this mission of the Spirit is alone sufficient to convince mankind of the Divinity of Jesus Christ. God gave to *Adam* a power of speaking one language; and afterwards he divided the same, to make a confusion among the builders of *Babel*: and Jesus Christ doth the same thing, to confirm the glory and belief of his Divinity. God vouchsafes the power of miracles to some, Jesus Christ communicates it to a far greater number; miracles not having been so generally wrought, because no people ever had that power in all the foregoing ages. The Father wrought so few miracles, that he might leave to the Son this means of

making himself known. The Son had the glory of pouring forth the Holy Ghost in a greater abundance than the Father, thereby to supply the shame of his humiliation. This is the true reason why the Scripture saith, That *the Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus Christ was not yet glorified.*

The second is, That from this miracle one ought to infer these two conclusions: the first is, That God was fully pacified by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the Apostles constantly representing the passion of our Saviour as a sacrifice offered by him; the other is, That from that time forward mankind was consecrated to God at his temple. Jesus Christ, in his prayer before his death, expresses himself much in the same manner as *Solomon* did at his dedication of the first temple, and fire from heaven falls down on his sacrifice: Jesus Christ consecrates his Apostles to be the living stones of his temple, and causes the heavenly flames to fall down upon them, as had formerly been granted at *Solomon's* dedication of the first temple.

The third is, That the *Jews* themselves cannot conceive a more glorious or magnificent accomplishment of the ancient oracles concerning the effusion of the Holy Spirit at the time of the Messiah, than what we find related by *St. Luke*; whereof the whole world may see the visible effects, in the calling of the *Gentiles* to the Christian religion: from whence one may rationally conclude, That Jesus Christ must be acknowledged for the Messiah whom God had promised.

C H A P. XV.

That, according to the Prophecies, the Apostles of JESUS CHRIST have called the GENTILES to the Profession of the Christian Religion.

WE have already seen what was the design of God, and that the distinction which he made of the *Jews* from other nations, was only that the Messiah might by that means be the more certainly known, in whom all mankind had a right, as being promised to *Adam*.

God renewed the idea of this truth in a very lively manner, when he assured *Abraham*, before he gave him the law of circumcision, *That in his seed all nations should be blessed.* *Jacob*, enlightened by the spirit of prophecy on his death-bed, plainly takes this truth for granted, when he says that the Messiah, whom he calls *Shiloh*, was to be the expectation of the *Gentiles*, *Gen. xlix.* Why doth he not say, that he was to be the expectation of the *Jews*, but because he supposeth that they were to be rejected, and the *Gentiles* called in their stead?

One sees in the *Psalms*, and in the Prophets until *Malachi* inclusively, a thousand declarations of this future calling of the *Gentiles* to the faith

faith of the Messiah; and though the most part of the ideas which the Prophets make use of, seem to be very figurative, describing the Messiah as a conqueror, who was to subdue the whole world to his dominion by the force of arms; yet we find a great many others interwoven with them, which only relate to the profession of the religion of the Messiah, and which, not being capable of any other sense, sufficiently determine the others, so as not to perplex the reader with those seeming obscurities. But Jesus Christ very distinctly declares this in divers places, and above all in the xxivth of St. *Matthew*; *This Gospel, saith he, shall be preached throughout the world.*

Now, nothing could ever be more exactly fulfilled than these ancient oracles have been. Let the *Jews* cavil as long as they please about our application of many of the prophecies of the *Old Testament* to our Saviour; let them put a sense upon the Scriptures, which treat of this subject, contrary to what the *Jews*, who were contemporary with Jesus Christ, ever did, and to the most of those with whom the first Christians, as *Justin*, *Tertullian*, and others, from time to time disputed; yet at least they cannot deny, but that the thing has been exactly fulfilled.

It is clearer than the day, that nothing could be more exact. All Christians, from one end of the world to another, worshipped the God of *Israel*, according to the prophecy of *Malachi*: Jesus Christ subjected them to the moral part of the law of *Moses*. The *Mahometans* themselves have learnt of the Christians to acknowledge no other God but the God of *Israel*. The multitude of false Gods which the world worshipped, are vanished from all places where Christianity has been planted; and very few are left in comparison of those which are already destroyed; so that we must consider the thing as already gone very far. In truth, while things continue thus, one may reasonably maintain against the *Jews*, that our Jesus and his Disciples have taken away all the glory which could be reserved for that Messiah whom they expect. They must, if they be jealous for the glory of him whom they look for, endeavour to make the world forsake the worship of the God of *Israel*, to make way for the accomplishment of those oracles which can have no place in that state wherein the world is at present.

But though this reflexion upon the exact accomplishment of the oracles concerning the call of the *Gentiles* to the religion of the Messiah may suffice, yet I think myself bound to make some further observations upon this subject. In short, every thing deserves to be considered in this calling of the *Gentiles* to the knowledge of the Gospel.

I do not take notice at present that the person first employed in calling of the *Gentiles*, is St. *Peter*, to whom Jesus Christ had promised the honour of founding his church amongst the nations, and who himself at first thought that the thing was unlawful, and who, after a vision given him for that very purpose, observes the *Jewish* customs, and obliges the *Gentiles* to do the same; neither do I observe that the first who was called was *Cornelius*, a *Roman* officer, who resided at *Cæsarea*, where he became a profelyte. Behold here a man engaged to examine that which he had a better opportunity to do than any one else, by reason of the nature of his charge, whether what the soldiers had deposed concern-

ing the Disciples stealing away the body of our Saviour, were true or no.

I am obliged to confine myself to some general reflexions upon this matter. I consider first the difficulty which was upon all accounts in this design of calling of the *Gentiles*, and the prodigious success which this call of the *Gentiles* met with, according to the Prophets.

To make us understand this difficulty better, we need only consider, 1. What were the prejudices of the *Jews*, even those who were become Christians; 2. What was the state of the world at the time of Jesus Christ. The Heathens enjoyed each their several religions for a longer time than any history could trace it: they attributed the happiness of their states and families to their gods. 3. We must observe the nature of that preaching by which the *Gentiles* were converted: its subject was the strangest thing in the world. If the cross of Jesus Christ had proved the scandal of the *Jews*, who looked upon the Messiah as the fountain of blessing, and the cross as an accursed punishment; it was looked upon no otherwise than as an heap of follies by the *Greeks* (who boasted themselves to be the wisest men of the world), as well as by the other *Gentiles*.

Yet, after all this, one sees a prodigious success, and a surprising extent of this call. Within a little time the world was filled with Christians: St. Paul writes to those that were in *Asia*, *Greece*, and *Italy*; St. Peter, to those of *Pontus*; St. John, to those who were among the *Parthians*. There were not wanting some in the very emperor's court, even that of *Nero*, who put St. Peter and St. Paul to death in the sixty-seventh year of our Lord.

One cannot attend to a success of this nature, without being extremely surpris'd: let us conceive of a dozen, or thereabouts, of poor beggars, a dozen of unlearned men coming out of *Judea*, who should accuse the whole world of folly and impiety; every one opposing them, especially the *Jews*, who were incensed to see them go about to establish the belief of the cross in the world, as a doctrine which would explain the accomplishment of the promises of God concerning the Messiah, of those promises wherewith the *Jews* had filled all the *East*, and which had rendered them at this time doubly ridiculous.

When, instead of persecuting the Apostles, they hearken unto them; or even when in the midst of chains and prisons they are examined, they declare that true godliness consists in knowing Jesus Christ, even the same Jesus who was crucified in *Judea*, for whose name's sake they had been publicly scourged by order of the council of the *Jews*. Thus we find St. Paul boasting of his severe usage.

If persons question them more particularly about the actions of this Jesus, they answer coldly, That the Son of God came down from heaven; that he took upon him our flesh in the womb of a virgin; that when he was become man, and yet an infant, *Herod* sought to kill him, to avoid which he was carried into *Egypt*; that after having lived thirty years obscurely in a carpenter's shop, he was taken by the *Jews*, scourged, mocked, crowned with thorns, nailed to the cross, where they gave him vinegar to drink; that there he cried out, *My God, my God, Why hast thou*

thou forsaken me? that he died, was buried, and rose again the third day, as he had promised before his death.

But what is it that this JESUS teaches to those that would follow him? His Apostles, in his name, require all men to renounce the pleasures of this life; to abhor polygamy and fornication; and, instead of revenging an affront, to turn the other cheek to him that smites us; and to leave our cloak also with him who takes our coat from us; to go two miles with him who constrains us to guide him one; to love our enemies; and to wish well, and pray for those that despitefully use us, and persecute us.

But what rewards will he give to his servants? The Apostles answer, That he promises nothing that is considerable in this life, but an everlasting happiness in the world to come.

It is visible that nothing seems to be worse contrived to gain credit than this story. The weakness of Jesus Christ is visible; he was crucified. What ground is here to believe that he was able to perform his promises? The service he prescribes is very rough; the reward he proposes is at a great distance; and, moreover, it is such as appears very doubtful to those who are not furnished with strong impressions of the immortality of the soul, and of a life to come.

But, on the other hand, the Apostles solidly demonstrate that he is GOD, and not a mere man; that he can raise the dead, and that he can perform his promises. Though they do not say, Bring hither the blind, the lame, and the deaf, and we will heal them in his name; present your dead to us, and we will raise them in the name of that Jesus who is born of *Mary*, of that Jesus who died, and cried out on the cross, *My God, my God, Why hast thou forsaken me?* (for I acknowledge that this miraculous power which they had received, was only exerted upon certain occasions, which the Spirit of God made choice of); yet they did that which was equivalent: for when blind men were brought to them, they said, Ye blind, in the name of Jesus, recover your sight; and in like manner to the lepers, to possessed persons, to the sick of the palsy, to the dead. Upon this, all were converted, and the cross of Jesus Christ triumphs.

There are three sorts of people in the world, wise men, men of a middle sort, and such as are of a lower capacity; and several of these three orders of men made profession of the Christian religion, as well amongst the *Jews* as *Heathens*.

C H A P. XVI.

That the Christian Religion is founded on Proofs of Fact, and that consequently nothing in the World is so certain as the Truth of it.

THIS reflexion ought to be made more than once, because there is nothing so proper to establish the truth of the Christian religion beyond all contest, or that will confound Atheists, profane persons, and *Jews*, who endeavour to oppose it, more effectually.

I say then, that the chief articles on which the whole Christian religion is grounded, are confirmed, proofs of fact, that is, by witnesses whose evidence cannot be questioned, without shaking all the certainty which we can have of any thing in this world, and without rejecting all the means whereby we can assure ourselves of the knowledge which we enjoy.

Many particular events which were perfectly divine, happened at the birth of *John the Baptist*, the forerunner of the Messiah; they were known throughout all the hill country of *Judea*; they happened to a priest, that is, a public person, and it was when he was employed in his public function in the temple; they are seconded by miracles which were known to the whole nation of the *Jews*; they are followed by the public ministry of *John the Baptist*, a man who censures all *Judea*, who openly declares himself the forerunner of the Messiah, and who hath a great number of Disciples, who are distinguished from those of our Saviour, who were spread throughout all *Judea*, and who continued after the death of our Saviour; these were Disciples of a man who, besides all this, doth not keep up any correspondence with our Saviour, and who at last falls by the hand of *Herod* for censuring his incest and lusts.

JESUS CHRIST is born in *Bethlehem*, under *Augustus*; a fact of which the *Roman* commissioners were witnesses, and which the records of that empire preserved as long as they were in being.

That the Angels testified their joy at his birth, is a fact which was confirmed by the shepherds of *Bethlehem*, long before Jesus Christ had any Disciples.

That a new star conducted the wise men of the *East* to *Bethlehem*, was an illustrious fact, and of which *Herod*, and the priests, and great men amongst the *Jews*, were exactly informed; and the Apostles would have found it a very difficult matter to impose this upon them, if the thing had not been distinctly known.

That the birth of Jesus Christ, and the arrival of the wise men, affrighted *Herod*, was a public thing, confirmed by the murder of the infants of *Bethlehem*, and reported to *Augustus*, together with the death of *Antipater*; whereof *Macrobius*, a Heathen, who was qualified for the knowledge of such a story, hath preserved the memory. Neither can this fact be called in question, because *Josephus* makes no mention of it, since so famous a Heathen attests it. *Augustus*, saith he, having heard that amongst the infants which *Herod* the king of the *Jews* had caused to be killed

killed in Syria, under two years of age, he had killed his own son, said, That it was better to be Herod's hog than his son.

That Jesus Christ was in *Egypt*, and that he returned from thence, is a fact with which the *Jews* to this day reproach our Saviour, as if he had learned there the secret of working miracles.

That he confounded the Doctors at twelve years of age, is a fact of which the whole nation of the *Jews* were informed, because it happened at one of those three solemn feasts which brought up the whole nation to *Jerusalem*.

That Jesus Christ was baptized by St. *John*, and that he received a most glorious testimony from him, is a fact of which all those *Jews* whom the ministry of St. *John* had drawn to the river *Jordan* were witnesses.

That Jesus Christ chose for his Apostles men without learning, and of the meanest of the people, that he lived with them three years and an half, preaching his doctrine, correcting the traditions of the *Jews*, working miracles, and foretelling things to come, are facts of which the whole people of the *Jews* were witnesses; and all the *Romans* that were in *Judea* were fully informed of them; yea, they were known to all the world. The *Jews* could not be ignorant of them, who came up to *Jerusalem* from all parts of the world, to celebrate ten solemn feasts according to the law, during the time in which these things were acting, and from thence carried the report of them into several parts of the world where they were dispersed.

It is evident also that Jesus Christ laboured to persuade men that he was the promised Messiah: this was the most considerable fact in the world to the *Jews*, and which had relation to the most important point of their religion, and touched them the nearest; a fact which happened at a time when all were in expectation of the Messiah, as appears by the consultation of *Herod*, when the *Jews*, who were oppressed by the *Romans*, did most earnestly sigh for his appearance; a fact confirmed by public oracles, and known to the whole nation, yea to the Heathens themselves, for near three hundred years.

That Jesus Christ, notwithstanding all his miracles, was crucified at the pursuit of the *Jews*, and by the order of *Pontius Pilate*, is a fact of which the whole people of the *Jews* were witnesses, because it happened at the feast of the passover, that is, at a solemnity where the whole nation of the *Jews* was assembled: it is a fact which no Heathens ever went about to deny; they reproached the Christians with it, who are so little ashamed of it, that, according to the orders of the same Jesus, they celebrate the memorial of it in the sacrament of the eucharist.

That there was thick darkness over all the land at the crucifixion of Jesus Christ from the third hour till the sixth, that is, from nine of the clock till twelve, according to our way of computing the time, was a fact of that nature, that the whole nation of the *Jews* might easily have convinced the Apostles of this imposture, if it had not been as confessed a truth as the darkness in *Egypt*, before the departure of the *Israelites*.

That Jesus Christ was raised the third day, is a fact attested by a great number of witnesses, the memorial whereof they celebrated every

eight day, as long as they lived, by a constant law, because they considered this resurrection as the seal of those truths which Jesus Christ had taught them : it is a fact, the truth whereof they have maintained before magistrates, before the people, in all parts of the world ; it is a fact which they have publicly preached up, notwithstanding all prohibitions which have been made ; in short, it is a fact which they have asserted in the midst of the most cruel torments, and even until death.

That Jesus Christ sent down upon his Apostles the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, is a fact of which all *Jerusalem* was a witness fifty days after the feast of the passover, when Jesus Christ was crucified ; it is as remarkable a fact as ever happened : twelve fishermen of *Galilee* maintain, in the face of the whole *Jewish* nation, that the same Jesus whom the whole nation had demanded to be crucified but fifty days before, and who did actually suffer upon an infamous cross, is risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, after he had eaten and drunk with them, and had appeared several times to them after his resurrection ; and that he had given them the power of speaking all sorts of languages, and of healing all manner of diseases.

That they spoke divers languages, is a fact most notorious, the truth whereof appears from the conversion of the world, which was found to be filled with their Disciples, but a few years after this fact was done.

That they had the power of healing all diseases as well as their master, is a fact the truth whereof is established upon indisputable testimonies, insomuch as their successors received the same gift by the laying-on of their hands. Two hundred years after, *Tertullian* mentions this gift, as being at that time well known amongst Christians.

That the Apostles, after they were rejected by the *Jews*, preached the Gospel to the *Gentiles*, who also received it, is a fact of which there are so many proofs in the world, that it cannot be called in question.

That the converted *Jews* strongly opposed themselves against the preaching of the Gospel to the *Gentiles*, pretending, as the *Jews* now do, that the Messiah with his gifts and graces was confined to their nation, is a fact so well attested, that it cannot be called in question, if we consider the first dispute, which gave occasion to the first council of the Apostles, and to the contests of *St. Paul* with those of his own nation.

That since that time the Apostles and their Disciples have maintained by their writings and disputes, and finally by their martyrdom, that Jesus was the Messiah ; that they have constantly stood to this claim, alledging the facts which the Gospel proposes, and maintaining that the matters there related were exact accomplishments of the promises of God, and of the ancient prophecies : that all this is unquestionable, one needs only read their sermons and speeches set down by *St. Luke*, and their epistles ; one needs only peruse the Heathen history, and the works of those that succeeded the Apostles, who followed their footsteps in establishing the truth of the Christian religion.

That the Apostles discharged their followers from the ceremonies which *Moses* prescribed, obliging them only to the essentials of morality ; that they annulled the law which permitted divorces without sufficient cause, and polygamy ; these are things which none, who have read their

their writings, or those of their first Disciples, can in the least question.

Lastly, That they foretold many things, as well as their master; that they published their predictions, which they have extended to the end of the world, and the return of Jesus from heaven to judge the world; and that they have recorded the particulars of many considerable events, observed by the Christians, which have happened from time to time; these are facts as well known, and as incontestable as any thing can be in the world, of such a nature: whole nations are witnesses of it. Differing sects, interpreters who have several opinions concerning these prophecies, the contests of the *Jews*, the opposition of Atheists, the cavils of Heretics, the cruelty of tyrants, all these concur to prove clearly that the Christians received these prophecies from the Apostles, as well as the truth of them, since even these oppositions were foretold, as well as the persecutions.

Thus I have given you a view of the greatest part of the most important articles which are contained in the Christian religion; and I think that they are so solidly grounded upon proofs of fact, that I can assert with reason, that no facts in the world can be produced, so well established as these are, which are the fundamentals of our religion.

What facts are there which are attested by whole nations, as the miracles of Jesus Christ were? What facts are there about which men were so careful to inform themselves, as when a man pretends to the title of the Messiah? What thing can we suppose that requires a stronger conviction, because of the difficulties it involves, than that of the resurrection of Jesus Christ? for those who were eye-witnesses of his crucifixion, that is, who had seen him punished by the magistrate, the horror of all his own people, and in all appearance forsaken of heaven.

To speak the truth, as there cannot be a greater instance of fanatical folly, than to attribute to twelve poor fishermen, whose master was crucified at *Jerusalem*, by public order, and by an effect of the hatred of the whole nation—I say, to attribute to them the design of persuading that people, and the *Gentiles* also, that this man was raised again from the dead, that he rules in heaven, that he has bestowed upon them the miraculous gifts of speaking all sorts of languages, and healing all manner of diseases—if this Jesus had been never raised from the dead, nor had bestowed such gifts upon them, the mind of man not being capable of so great folly; so we have all the reason in the world to conclude, that since they have attested this fact, and confirmed it by all the proofs which might convince those who, though they were not prejudiced, yet were astonished at the difficulty of the things themselves, so nothing can be more certain than facts so confirmed, as we pretend that these actually were.

C H A P. XVII.

That it cannot be questioned, whether the Books of the New Testament were written by the Apostles.

BEFORE we alledge those arguments which will invincibly confirm the truth of the books of the *New Testament*, I desire the reader to make these three or four reflexions, which seem to be very important to our present design.

The first is, That we can scarcely conceive a more simple and strong way of proving a fact, than what we find in the books here mentioned. The design of the four Evangelists, for instance, is to prove that Jesus, the son of *Mary*, is the promised Messiah; and that, in his birth, his life, his doctrine, his death, and resurrection, we meet with all the characters which the Prophets attributed to the Messiah. How do the Evangelists execute this their design? In the most proper way imaginable to convince others, and most proportionable to their design: they simply relate the facts; and facts so clear, that if we do not question the truth of them, we cannot doubt that Jesus is the Messiah. They relate the most important of these facts, as things that happened in the face of the whole nation of the *Jews*, as I have shewed in the precedent chapter; they relate them as facts for the most part owned by the *Jews*, from which the malice of the *Jews* extorted other consequences: they give us an account of the judgment which the *Jews* made concerning the miracles that he wrought on the sabbath day, upon the Disciples gathering the ears of corn; of the answer which the *Jews* made to *Pilate*, *We have no other king but Cæsar*.

The second is, That the Apostles, supposing a general expectation of the Messiah, when Jesus Christ appeared, shew that there was a very great knowledge of the prophecies that respected the Messiah, and a great impossibility of applying those oracles to particular facts, if the truth of those facts had not been beyond contest. Now we find very few oracles of which they did not make an application to the life and actions of our Saviour. We will suppose the Apostles to have been men of great abilities, and who had long studied the books of the Prophets, that they might tear out such small passages as they fancied might be applicable to Jesus Christ: however, it cannot be denied, that it does not appear by their writings that they had such an exact knowledge of the prophecies; whence it might follow that they judged them to be applicable to Christ, by comparing them with the facts which they relate. 2. That they had this knowledge in common with the rest of the *Jews*, who at this day apply the same texts to the Messiah, if they are not constrained by their clearness to wrest them some other way.

The third reflexion is, That, in the relation of these facts, they give us all the marks of an extraordinary sincerity; they represent indeed whatsoever was for their master's glory, but they do as well relate those things which seem to be shameful to his memory. They tell us of the Angels that assisted at his birth, and at his death; but tell us withal,
that

that he was tempted of the Devil, and in all appearance forsaken by God at his death. They tell us, that the multitudes were resolved to take him by force, and make him their king, as acknowledging him for the Messiah; and they tell us, that the same multitude, some time after, demanded him to be crucified.

The fourth is, That they represent very naturally all the judgments of the synagogue against Jesus: they represent him as excommunicated and crucified by them; they describe the reports that were current among the *Jews*; that the disciples had taken away his body out of the sepulchre; that the soldiers had deposed the same, in the forms of law, before *Pilate*. From all which it appears that they were faithful historians, and not at all prepossessed; and that they used no invectives against the authors of these false reports, contenting themselves to establish the truth of the matter, by specifying the places, the time, the witnesses, and other circumstances, which are proper to establish the truth of the facts they relate.

These four reflexions being once supposed, I say, it is impossible to dispute the truth of these books, or to call their authority in question: to be convinced of which, one needs only consider these two things; the first is, that the Apostles are the authors of the books which pass under their names; the other is, that their faithfulness is not to be suspected by us.

The former of these is so universally received, that nothing will be certain in matters of this nature, if this be questioned.

The four Evangelists have published their writings in populous cities, where they have been constantly read every Lord's day in Christian assemblies; as St. *Justin Martyr* assures us, in his apology, which was writ about the middle of the second century.

The Apostles writ their epistles to numerous churches, to whom their hand, as well as the persons by whom they sent them, were well known. Can we instance in any writing in the world that hath been preserved with the like carefulness? Let the *Jews* tell us what they please concerning the care and faithfulness of their ancestors to preserve the books of the *Old Testament*, they can alledge nothing, but we can alledge the same in favour of the books of the *New Testament*. They tell us, that *Moses*, under the penalty of a curse, had forbid the adding any thing thereto; and do not we read the same threatening in the last book of the *New Testament*? The philosophers of each sect have nothing of this weight to alledge, as an argument that the books which they ascribe to their masters are really theirs: we find only a few men in every age who made it their business to study the books of the philosophers, physicians, and lawyers; but, ever since the Apostles, there have been Christians who made it their business to peruse and preserve their writings, as considering that they are the fountains of eternal life.

One may upon this occasion take notice of two things which deserve some attention: the one is, That the design of some Heretics, as of *Marcion*, for instance, to corrupt the copies of the writings of the *New Testament*, which were found in the hands of those of his sect, is a good argument to prove that they could not be corrupted. In short, we find all the world opposed themselves against this corruption, and confuted them

them by the agreement of all the other copies in the world which were exempt from this corruption.

The other is, That if there are some books whose authority was doubtful for some time, by those who otherwise were accounted orthodox, yet this cannot justly prejudice the truth of the *New Testament*: the reason is, because this happened only to some few epistles, which were written, not to particular churches, but to whole nations. And indeed it is plain, from common sense, that when writings are sent to whole bodies (as the epistle of St. *Jude*) without communicating the copy to particular men; that they may with more justice be suspected, than those whose hand was known by many, and particularly by those to whom the epistles were sent.

Moreover, the account which the ancient fathers of the church give us of the uncertainties of this nature, sufficiently shew that they were very careful in examining these things; and when at any time some particular men did not use care enough in examining these books, as it once happened in the church of *Ross* (a), where a book which was falsely attributed to St. *Peter* was preserved, supposing it to have been his, the other churches not consenting to it, that abuse was soon remedied, the writings abolished, that there is scarce a weak remembrance left of them.

One sees that these remarks are sufficient to assure us, that the Apostles are the authors of those books which bear their names: and if this way of confirming a matter of this nature be accounted good and solid, when we speak of the books of *Aristotle* or *Hippocrates*, it must be infinitely stronger when it is applied to the writings of the Apostles.

In short, these books were written to be read by persons of the meanest capacities, by women, by children, as well as by Doctors; and they treat of matters of which the whole world hath reason to be informed. If some *Jews* suffered martyrdom under *Antiochus*, to preserve the books of the *Old Testament*, we have like examples, and as numerous, of those who have done as much for the preservation of the books of the *New Testament*. Lastly, if the *Jews* have looked upon those as traitors and apostates, who gave up those books to the fury of their persecutors, the Christians have testified no less aversion for those who delivered the books of the Apostles to the fury of Heathens, even to the subjecting of them to the utmost rigour of ecclesiastical discipline, in the third century, and before.

(a) *Euseb.* lib. vi. cap. 12.

C H A P. XVIII.

That one cannot doubt of the Faithfulness of the Witness of the Apostles concerning those Facts which they relate.

NEITHER is it more difficult to establish this second truth, That the faithfulness of the Apostles cannot be reasonably questioned. To be convinced of this, one needs only consider the character of the Apostles, the character of their writings, of their sermons, of the sufferings, and of their martyrdom; and, last of all, the character of those amongst whom they wrote these things, and preached them to their death.

As to their sermons, the Apostles were contemporaries with Jesus Christ; they spoke of things which they had seen, and distinguished them carefully from those which they had learned another way. They were honest men, simple, and without learning, very fit to bear witness in matters of fact; they were persons that preached nothing but love, and the study of truth; they protested, in the midst of their sufferings, that they could not conceal the things which they had seen and heard; they are men without covetousness or ambition; they forsake all that they possess in the world; St. *Matthew* leaves his house and goods, to follow Jesus Christ. Their epistles speak nothing more than instances of Christian poverty, of the loss of their goods, and of mighty instances of their charity.

These witnesses are sufficiently numerous; they preach and write in several places, and yet they agree admirably in their relations of the same facts: it appears they had such lively and distinct impressions, that they frequently make use of the very same words. The difference which is found in some part of their books, is a manifest argument that nothing but the force of the matter made them agree in their relations.

And, indeed, how is it otherwise conceivable that four such authors as the Evangelists, should agree about so many opinions, so many miracles, so many prophecies, so many disputes, and, in a word, about so many matters of fact? Shall we say that the second took his copy from the first, the third from the second, &c.? This appears to be evidently false, by perusing of their works; and by the difference of their style.

And certainly there appears so great ingenuity in their writings, that we cannot accuse them of having had a design to deceive the world: they tell you plainly of the meanness of their condition and original; they sincerely discover their own weaknesses, their ambition, their vanity, their disputes, their heats, their murmurings. St. *Matthew* tells us that he was a publican, that is, a servant of the *Roman* power, whom the *Jews* looked upon as an excommunicated person, and as an enemy of their own nation: he relates the ridiculous pretension of the sons of *Zebedee*, founded on the carnal notion of their mother concerning the temporal kingdom of the Messiah. They set down St. *Peter's* denying of his master; they do not dissemble their common ignorance, which made them

them expect a temporal king in Jesus Christ; they frankly publish their own incredulity, when *Mary Magdalen* brought them the news of our Saviour's resurrection; and they describe the obstinate resistance of *St. Thomas* about this matter, against the unanimous testimony of all his companions.

They do not content themselves with saying in general that some illustrious facts have happened, but they punctually set down all the circumstances; so that it clearly appears their design was to have their writings examined, and that after an exact search men might acquiesce in the conclusions which they draw from thence. For instance, they do not tell us that Jesus Christ raised a great many from the dead; they only tell us of three, describing the circumstances of their resurrection, the time, the place, the age, the persons, the assistants; and all these, with other particulars, which impostors care not to enter upon, lest they should contradict themselves, or be easily confuted.

I have already shewn, that the nature of the things themselves which the Disciples of Jesus Christ have written, is such as will not permit us to accuse them of having had a design to impose upon the world: they are facts, and not discourses, which are left upon record; and facts relating to the most important matter in the world, than which none was ever more thoroughly examined; they are facts which are linked so closely, and which have so strict a dependance one upon the other, and so interwoven with the most public transactions, either in civil or religious affairs, that it was impossible for them to form the design of such an imposture.

In short, it is very remarkable, that these facts were publicly known to the kings of *Judea*, to the *Roman* magistrate, to the principal ministers of state, and of their religion, and to the whole nation of the *Jews* assembled ten several times at their solemn feasts; to the several sects of the *Jewish* religion, the *Pharisees*, *Sadducees*, and *Essens*, who are attacked, censured, and confuted, in these books.

One ought to consider, after all, that the Apostles at first preached and wrote in *Judea*, where were the witnesses of those miracles which they related; the impotent, the blind, the deaf, which Jesus Christ had restored; the dead whom he raised, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* whom he censured, the *Sadducees* whom he confuted, the auditors who had heard him preach, the towns wherein he had conversed most familiarly, the same people that followed him, the same enemies that conspired his death, the same judges, and the same authority which condemned him to death.

St. Luke, in the relation he gives us of the speeches and apologies which the Apostles made before kings, before the great council of the *Jews*, and in the midst of their synagogues, brings them in speaking of the facts contained in the Gospel, as of matters publicly known and attested by a vast number of witnesses: thus *St. Peter* speaks of them in the tenth of the *Acts*; and the other sacred writers spake of them in the same manner in their epistles.

Here is a new character which we ought carefully to observe: we find no temporal interest which obliged the Disciples to adhere to Jesus Christ; and we find yet less reason to suppose, if Jesus Christ had not been raised from

from the dead, and they had not seen him after his death, that they should have had any concern for his glory: they would certainly have condemned and anathematized him as an impostor, who by means of some false miracles, and an affected holiness, had abused them; whereas indeed we find that they defended the glory of Jesus Christ with so much heat, and that with so constant a testimony to his resurrection, that they exposed themselves to all manner of reproaches, to all sorts of punishment, and most cruel deaths, to confirm the belief of that fact. They despise the *anathemas* of the *Jewish* synagogue, they contemn their public obloquies, they value not the hatred of their whole nation: they preach this crucified person in *Judea*, they preach him also in other countries, that he might be equally adored by *Jews* and *Heathens*: they leave their employments, to follow this *Jesus*; and after they had accompanied him three years, they depart from *Judea*, to go and confound the idolatry of the world, and within *Rome* itself to deery the gods they worshipped, obliging them to acknowledge him whom the men of *Jerusalem* had crucified, for their God; him, who had been the detestation of the *Jews*; him, whom the *Roman* magistrate had given up to their fury, in making him undergo the punishment appointed for slaves.

Lastly, one ought to observe it as a thing of great weight in this whole question, that this testimony of the Apostles, which is so uniform, so solemn, so well confirmed by all manner of means, and sealed with their deaths, is not contested or contradicted by any historian of that time. There was nothing more easy, either for *Jews* or *Gentiles*, than to convince the world of the falsehood of the facts related in the Gospel; they had the books of the Apostles in their hands, they were masters of the public records: it was a matter of general concernment to the *Jews*, to oppose themselves to an imposture of so terrible a consequence as the history of the Evangelists was, if it had been entirely false; neither was it less the interest of the *Romans* to expose a sect, of whom *Pliny* the younger tells us, that all sorts of people joined with them, though they were persecuted with incredible violence. In the mean time we find nobody that hath contradicted the relation of the Apostles, nor any author that has writ against Jesus Christ or his Apostles. A long time after indeed there was a book seen, called *The Acts of Pilate*, published by the order of the emperor *Maximian*, which endeavoured to overthrow the truth of the facts that are related in the Gospels; but those acts are contradicted by all the *Heathen* historians yet remaining that were contemporary with the Apostles. Finally, a vast number of *Jews* and *Gentiles* were immediately convinced by the authority of the Apostles; and a belief in the Gospel hath passed from *Judea* to the ends of the world, according to the predictions which God gave by the ministry of the Prophets, and by the mouth of our Saviour.

C H A P. XIX.

More Reasons to manifest the Faithfulness of the Apostles.

WHAT I have already alledged might be sufficient to establish the faithfulness of the Apostles; but, for a fuller conviction of the reader, concerning so weighty a truth of our religion, I shall superadd some few more reflexions.

First of all, it cannot be denied that the form of the writings of the *New Testament* is vastly different from those which may be suspected as forgeries. When the four Evangelists had related the miraculous birth of *John the Baptist*, they next set down that of our Saviour Christ, with the actions of his life, until his death, which does not comprehend above four or five years.

St. Luke writes the history of the Apostles, and in particular that of *St. Paul*, and takes in only the space of about thirty years: now let any one judge whether they who confine themselves to so narrow limits in respect of time, place, and persons, have any design to impose.

The remainder of these books is composed of two sorts of writings, one epistolary, and the other prophetic: for the prophetic parts, time must prove the truth of the predictions which are contained in the *Apocalypse*, as well as of those which are found in some of the epistles of the Apostles.

As for the epistles, besides some moral instructions, they are almost all employed in deciding some questions which the calling of the *Gentiles* to the Gospel, and the abolishing of the ceremonial law, had raised in the minds of the *Jews* who were converted to Christianity. We know that, of all writings, epistles are the most certain monuments, and those which men endeavour to forge least.

After all, it is certain that the sacred writers have with great care set down the time in which every event happened, as well according to the style of the *Jews*, in pointing out to us their solemn feasts, as that of the *Gentiles*, by setting down the year of the *Roman* emperor, and the character of the *Roman* magistrates.

A second character, which hinders us from accusing these books as forgeries, is this, that we cannot deny but that these books are of a very particular nature: they contain several considerable oracles which were to be fulfilled in the same generation, as that of the destruction of *Jerusalem*; they contain a continued series of miracles, of which all *Judea* was witness; they contain a great number of sermons, preached upon several illustrious occasions in the synagogues, in the temple of *Jerusalem*, and before thousands of people in the wilderness. Let any one judge whether it would be an easy thing to make these writings to be received, if we should suppose them to be lately forged.

This third reflexion is also considerable: it is certain that the Gospel was preached in the greatest cities of the empire, by the Apostles, and the Disciples of Jesus: the history of the Apostles, and their epistles themselves, make it evident, that there were numerous churches at *Rome*, *Corinth*,

Corinth, Thessalonica, Philippi, Ephesus, Antioch, and several other famous places: it is also known that there were *Jewish* synagogues in the same places; now if this be the case, what possibility is there of suspecting the least imposture in the books of the Apostles, if we consider how they were drawn up? The Disciples of Christ did not only preach in the synagogues the same things which they have put in writing, but they also engaged the *Jews* to examine them, because they affirmed them with a constancy which the *Jews* could not but look upon as incredible obstinacy: first of all, that these were things beyond dispute, and could not be doubted of. Secondly, That they had been long since foretold by the Prophets. Thirdly, that they were an exact accomplishment of other prophecies which had relation to the promised Messiah. Fourthly, That seeing they could not question the facts contained in the Gospel, they ought to renounce Judaism, to receive baptism, and become Christians.

'Tis also of great importance to observe further, as I have already done, that the books of the *New Testament* were penned before the overthrow of the commonwealth of the *Jews*. There are only some of the works of St. *John*, which were writ after the destruction of *Jerusalem*. I have before observed that the Divine Providence ordered it so, that all the *Jews* for five-and-thirty years together, repairing thrice a year to *Jerusalem* at their three solemn festivals, might have greater opportunities to inform themselves of the truth of the facts contained in the Gospels, and the Acts of the Apostles.

To this remark I shall now add two weighty considerations; the one is, That the Christians for some years submitted themselves to the ceremonial law, and repaired with the *Jews* to *Jerusalem*, and by this means were engaged to examine the facts contained in the Gospel. The other is, That after the council of *Jerusalem*, they were dispensed with as to that custom, as well as the observing of all the other parts of the ceremonial law, which set the Christians in a greater opposition to the *Jews*, and so increased the necessity of examining very scrupulously on both sides, whatsoever was for or against them in those matters of religion.

This observation leads us naturally to another, That it is absolutely impossible that an imposture of this nature should not be discovered, when there ariseth a difference between those, who may be looked upon as the authors of the forgery, and those who after them endeavoured to gain credit to it. Now if we find that one Disciple of Jesus Christ betrays him without accusing him of the least crime or imposture; if we have seen the Christians at first united in the same assemblies with the *Jews*; and that there were several contests and disputes between the Apostles and those first Christians, yet without calling those facts which are contained in the Gospel, in question by either side: S. *Paul* takes notice of the contests which happened betwixt him and S. *Peter*; S. *Luke* relates the heats between S. *Paul* and *Barnabas*, upon very slight occasions, he sets down also the dispute which arose about the distribution of alms to the *Greek* and *Jewish* widows: one sees that there arose a dispute amongst the Apostles themselves, about the calling of the *Gentiles* to the Gospel; one sees afterwards the obstinacy of some of the *Jews*

of the sect of the *Pharisees*, who maintained the absolute necessity of submitting to circumcision, and *S. Paul's* opposition set down in his epistle to the *Galatians*. We need no more to make it evident, that there could be no concert nor collusion between them, to deceive or impose upon those to whom they preached the Gospel.

Let us go a little further; a dispute happens about a capital point of Christian religion, about the resurrection: inasmuch that *S. Paul* thinks himself obliged to write concerning it to the *Corinthians*, so that there was a necessity of examining the truth of the resurrection of Jesus Christ again.

Now we find that *S. Paul*, to confirm this doctrine in general, chiefly makes use of the instance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which he proves by arguments taken from the fact itself, that is, by witnesses whom he produceth. Whereupon I make this considerable reflection, That in comparing this dispute of *S. Paul* with the writings of the Evangelists, it clearly appears that they did not allege all the proofs they might have done. None of them relates in particular the number of those who saw Jesus Christ in *Galilee* upon the holy mountain; but *S. Paul* who had examined the faithfulness of their relations, and knew the witnesses, specifies the number, and observes that many of them were yet alive, if perhaps any of them were already dead.

I shall add only two considerations more, which prove that it was even impossible for the Apostles to impose upon the world on this occasion. The first is taken from their state and condition. They are no great lords, whose power might terrify any one from examining their writings; or whose reputation could not have been called in question without danger: on the contrary, they were men of mean condition, employed in base professions, often cast into prisons, and from time to time obliged to appear before magistrates for the same doctrine and the same facts which they published to the world. Let us consider then whether it were an easy matter for *S. Paul* for instance, I say for this *S. Paul*, a maker of tents, this *S. Paul* without reputation, without riches; this *S. Paul* who was seized at *Jerusalem* after divers persecutions, this *S. Paul* who was sent a prisoner to *Rome*, and imprisoned there under the power of the *Roman* magistrate, and who at last lost his life by *Nero's* order, to make those blindly believe all he said, who were at liberty to examine, whether all that *Luke* related as happening to him at *Jerusalem*, at *Malta*, at *Philippi*, at *Athens*, were indeed true, or only a framed story.

The second thing we ought to observe is, That not only the books of the Apostles were publicly read every Lord's day, by a constant law, of which we have most authentic witnesses in the writings of the Apostles themselves, and in other ancient books, which are still extant; but also that they were all of them written, not in *Hebrew*, which at that time was a dead tongue; not in *Syriac*, a language spoken in very few places; but in *Greek*, which at that time was the language commonly received throughout all the *Roman* empire; and besides was the language into which the Divine Providence had caused the *Old Testament* to be translated about three ages before, that men might compare the ancient oracles and their accomplishment together.

C H A P. XX.

That the whole Model of the Religion and Commonwealth of the Jews is at this Day so entirely destroyed, that the MESSIAH could no more be known.

WHAT I have before set down to establish the truth of those facts which serve for a foundation to the Christian religion, is certainly sufficient to answer the design which I formed in writing these reflections upon the books of the holy Scripture; and I believe I may with justice conclude, That as nothing is more uncontestable than the truth of those books, and of the facts in them related; so there is nothing more certain than the truth and divinity of the Christian religion. So that now I have only two things to do, with which I conceive it will be necessary to conclude these reflections: The one is, to shew the absolute impossibility of conceiving any other accomplishment of the ancient oracles than what is set down in the Gospel: The other is, that concerning the divisions amongst Christians, which are a scandal to the *Jews*, and especially concerning the difficulty of the mysteries which the Gospel proposes, which are so many stumbling blocks to them which hinder them from discerning those characters of truth in the Gospel, which by the fulfilling of the ancient oracles, appear therein with so much lustre. The former of these shall be the subject of this, and the latter of the next chapter.

As the pulling down of the scaffolds which were only set up to build a palace, is an infallible sign that the building is finished, so one may say, that the total defacing of the model, which God had formed in the law, that the Messiah at his coming might be certainly known, is an unanswerable proof that he is already come. It is worth our pains to make some reflections on this overthrow, that we may conclude against the *Jews*, that if the Messiah was yet to appear in the world, it would be impossible to know him, according to the characters which God had given of him before his appearing.

In the first place therefore, whereas God had confined the *Jews* to the land of *Canaan*, that they might be visible to all the posterity of *Noah*, of whom one part, that is, the offspring of *Cham*, possessed *Egypt* and *Africa*; the posterity of *Japhet*, *Europe* and the lesser *Asia*; and those of *Shem*, the rest of *Asia*; the *Jews* at present are driven from that country; and far from being restored to it after seventy years, as they were by *Cyrus*, they have been for ever banished thence, by a decree of the emperor *Adrian*, who forbid them so much as to turn their eyes towards *Judea*, which was in the year of Christ 135. The Heathen *Celsus* insults over them in these remarkable words: *They have no more, saith he, either land or house remaining to them.*

Secondly, so far were they from having any remainders of a temporal power, that they were then wholly deprived of it. See what *Tertullian*

faith of them in the year of our Saviour 204. (b). *They wander up and down the world like dispersed vagabonds, banished from their climate and country, without man, without God for their king, and are not permitted, as strangers, to set foot on their native soil.* We read a decree of Honorius the emperor, which deprives them of the right of nominating their patriarchs, or of paying them any tribute; which shews that their authority was wholly extinct.

Thirdly, Their temple at *Jerusalem* being destroyed in the seventieth year of our Lord, as that in *Egypt* called *Onion* was the year following, it could never be built again, notwithstanding that *Julian* the apostate, out of his hatred to the Christians, favoured that enterprise in the year of our Saviour 363. There is a letter still extant which *Julian* writ to the *Jews*, to assure them of his protection, and to encourage them to that work, but it was not so much his death which dashed that undertaking, as a very memorable opposition from Heaven.

Marcelinus a Heathen gives us this account of it (c). *And being desirous to propagate the memory of his government by the greatness of his works, he with vast expence designed to rebuild the splendid temple which was formerly at Jerusalem, which after many and bloody battles, being besieged by Vespasian, and afterwards by Titus, was at last taken with difficulty: he committed the care of hastening the business to Alypius of Antioch, who had formerly been pro-præfect of Britain. As therefore this Alypius was vigorously prosecuting the work, being assisted by the lieutenant of the province, terrible balls of fire frequently breaking forth near the foundations, sometimes burnt the workmen, and made the place inaccessible: thus the design was laid aside, the element itself beating them back on purpose. Julian easily apprehended that their religion would perish, and that it could never be restored without the temple.*

In the fourth place the observation of some of their laws was absolutely forbidden, as being contrary to those of the *Roman* empire. Thus they were not suffered to have many wives.

Upon this overthrow many inconveniencies followed, which it will be convenient to represent at one view.

1. They no longer know those persons who at the first division of the land, by *Josbua*, were owners of the different parts of the land of *Canaan*.

2. Their families and tribes are confounded; their jubilee, which could not be kept but in the land of *Canaan*, and which obliged them to study their genealogies, having ceased long since.

(b) *Dispersi, palabundi, & cæli & soli sui extorres, vagantur per orbem, sine homine, sine Deo rege, quibus nec advenarum jure terram patriam saltem vestigio salutare conceditur.* Apolog. cap. 21.

(c) *Lib. 23. Imperiique sui memoriam magnitudine operum gestiens propagare, ambitiosum quondam apud Hierosolimam templum quod post multa & interneciva certamina, obsidente Vespasiano, posteaque Tito, egrè est expugnatum, instaurare sumptibus cogitabat inmodicis: negotiumque maturandum Alypio dederat Antiocheni, qui olim Britannias curaverat pro præfectis. Cum itaque rei idem fortiter instaret Alypius, juvenetque provinciæ Rector, metuendi globi flammæ prope fundamenta crebris assultibus erumpentes, fecere locum exustis aliquoties operatibus inaccessum: hocque modo elemento destitutus repellente, cessavit inceptum.*

3. The

3. The family of *David* is at this day utterly unknown.

4. They have no more lawful priests to observe the primogeniture, to examine the tokens of virginity, tho' it appears that, according to God's design, these laws were given on purpose to ascertain the knowledge of the Messiah, and to be like inclosures about this important truth, in the compass of which it might be the better examined.

Certainly if the *Jews* were still in possession of *Judea*, if they had their kings of the tribe of *Judah*, if they had their priests, if they were assured of their genealogies, if they still enjoyed all the other necessary means for establishing the certainty of their descents, if their temple had still subsisted in its former lustre, and that the sacrifices appointed by the laws were still offered there : the *Jews* might boldly answer that the *Shiloh* was not yet come, that is, they ought not to despair of seeing the Messiah born at *Bethlehem*, of the seed of *David*, and entering the temple of *Jerusalem*. Then the prophecy of *Daniel*, which determines 490 years for the term in which the Messiah was to appear, and be cut off by a violent death and punishment, would seem to be eluded.

But the term of the Messiah's coming is past, the commonwealth of the *Jews* is overturned, the temple of *Jerusalem* is destroyed 1600 years since : there are no more genealogies among the *Jews* ; they do not know their tribes, much less their families : how then can it be supposed that God should be true in his oracles (as we must acknowledge him to be) if they were never answered by the event ?

To speak the truth, it is impossible to consider the arguments we have alleged to prove that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, and especially those demonstrations which the Apostles have given us, without acknowledging these two things :

The first is, That it was very easy, at the time of Jesus Christ's appearing, to examine whether he who declared himself to be the Messiah, were so indeed ; so it is absolutely impossible to examine it, or know it, since the destruction of that model, if we suppose that God at first framed it for the determining of this question, as we have no reason to doubt it.

The second is, That the Christians exactly followed this Divine model, and being convinced of the truth of the facts which exactly corresponded with it, and which answered it in all its parts, they had all the reason imaginable to believe that Jesus Christ was the Messiah.

In short, if we consider it well, we shall find that the whole Christian religion is nothing but a question of fact between the *Jews* and *Christians* : but such a question as the *Jews* at present are not in a condition to maintain against the Christians.

Both *Jews* and Christians agree in the characters of the Messiah, or at least about the most of them. According to these characters the Messiah ought to be come : the Christians maintain that they may be found in Jesus Christ, and they prove it by matter of fact ; wherefore we must conclude, That either these characters attributed to the Messiah, are not proper characters to know him by, and so the wisdom of God will be eluded, and both *Jews* and Christians equally deceived, in taking that for a character of the Messiah which is not ; or else that both the Mes-

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Messiah is certainly come, and that he is no other than that Jesus whom we worship.

C H A P. XXI.

That the Greatness of the Mysteries of the Christian Religion, and the Division which is amongst Christians, cannot be any prejudice to the Proofs of the Truth of the Christian Religion.

I COME now to examine the double stumbling block which the Jews pretend against the Christian religion. *This religion, say they, propounds doctrines that are inconceivable, and contrary to reason: for instance, that of the Trinity, that of the Incarnation and the Divinity of the Messiah.* These are the doctrines which the Jews reject, as absolutely incompatible with the books of the *Old Testament*, which we have received from their hands.

But it is an easy matter to answer this objection. 1. It is founded upon a total forgetfulness of the solidity of those proofs of fact, which I have alleged. Jesus Christ is risen from the dead; this is a fact confirmed by several witnesses. It appears from *Tacitus*, that Jesus Christ suffered death under *Tiberius*, *Pontius Pilate* being governor of *Judea*. It is known that *Claudius* banished the Christians from *Rome*, in the year of our Lord 54. It is evident from *Tacitus*, in his life of *Nero*, that he accused the Christians of burning the city of *Rome*, which himself was the author of; the Christians therefore made a considerable body in the capital city of the empire, and this happened in the year of our Lord 64. *Suetonius* says the same thing. 2. It appears that *Pliny*, in *Trajan's* time, takes notice of the manner of their meetings. 3. *Dion Cassius* sets down the accusation brought in against *Flavius* and *Domitilla*; as against Atheists; which is the title *Julian* the apostate gives to *Constantine*, because the Christians rejected the worship of the Heathen gods. 4. It appears by the latter end of the *Acts of the Apostles* that this book was writ in the year of our Lord 63; and yet this book supposes the Gospel of *S. Luke* to have been written before it; and *S. Luke's* Gospel takes it for granted, that some of the other Gospels were already published. 5. It appears from the writings of *Clemens Romanus*, that the Epistle to the *Hebrews* was then written; and the same may be gathered from the books of *S. Ignatius*, *Polycarp*, and *S. Justin*. These facts, which are certain, are sufficient to prove that immediately after the death of Jesus Christ, his Apostles, and their Disciples, as eye-witnesses, maintained the truth of his resurrection. After this it may indeed be disputed, by what power he was raised, whether by a Divine power, or by his own; but it is ridiculous to dispute the fact by reasonings drawn from pretended absurdities which one may think to find in the doctrines of the Gospel.

Secondly, These mysteries, as for instance that of the Trinity, relates

lates to the Divine nature, which is incomprehensible; so that it is no strange thing if an idea of it be proposed to us, which not being distinctly known by us, may raise difficulties and perplexities in our minds. If I would discourse with one born blind, of the sun, of its light and heat, and should attribute to the sun the production of light, and afterwards of heat, he would find an infinite trouble not to imagine three suns. It is known how the philosophers, who agreed about the unity of the soul, have notwithstanding been obliged to attribute several faculties to it, which the common people look upon as very different things, and which seem to oppose the ideas of its unity and simplicity.

In the third place, The Christians prove very solidly, that these mysteries have been clearly proposed by the Apostles, who received their light from heaven as to these truths, and so might necessarily be believed upon their word, for the same reason that the Prophets of the *Old Testament* were formerly believed.

Moreover, they assert that these doctrines were first expressed, tho' not so clearly, in the *Old Testament*, which is in the hands of the *Jews*, the mortal enemies of Christians.

I add to these remarks, that most of those facts whose truth is so invincibly established, suppose these doctrines; and that the whole frame of the religion doth so necessarily require them, that we rob it of a considerable part of its glory in questioning or contesting any of them.

These reflections may suffice in general to resolve this difficulty of the *Jews*; and, for a more particular satisfaction, we refer the reader to those books which purposely treat of these mysteries, desiring him to observe carefully, that commonly the most difficult objections of Heretics against these matters, do rather oppose the terms which are made use of, or the notions which men follow in speaking of these truths, than the propositions contained in the writings of the *New Testament*.

At least one may be assured, that the *Jews* are constrained to resolve several parallel objections, to which one can scarcely give a satisfactory answer, without borrowing some distinctions and notions from the Christians.

Neither can the second objection of the *Jews* give us any more disturbance. It is true that there have been divisions amongst Christians, and are still to this day. What can we conclude thence? Can we reasonably conclude that therefore the first founders of Christianity were doubtful concerning the truth of those facts which are the support and foundation of it?

On the contrary, upon an attentive observation one may find,

1. That heresies have only served to render the truth of these facts more incontestable, by obliging those that had considered of them, to examine their certainty with more care and application. This is the judgment one ought to make upon all those heresies in the second age, about the truth of the flesh of Jesus Christ, or about the truth of his death: from thence men took occasion to take notice of, and collect with great care, all the circumstances that prove the truth of both these facts.

2. We find that the greatest part of these contests do not concern the truth of the facts, but the several consequences drawn from them, the truth of those matters continuing still beyond dispute. This we find in the

the dispute raised about the *millennium*, the truth of the promises of Jesus Christ being equally believed by both the disputing parties; but differently understood, according to the temper of those that considered of them; some forming gross and sensual conceptions concerning them; others having a more spiritual relish, which they had acquired by studying the prophecies, and their true sense.

3. We find that this division which had sprung up amongst Christians, is one of the most solid proofs of the truth of the books of the *New Testament*. If some fools have endeavoured to decry some of them, or to falsify some particular places, we see that both parties unite to repel that violence, by producing their copies, and beating back the impostors with their united strength. One sees that *Tertullian*, tho' a *Montanist*, writ prescriptions against Heretics; and *Epiphanius* takes notice (without any respect to some that were orthodox) of their crime in blotting out of their copies, that Christ had wept.

It is known that the division of the *Jews* into *Karaites* and *Thalmudists*, the jealousy between the *Jews* and *Samaritans*, and the division between the *Jews* and *Christians*, is a means of preserving the Scripture, and hindering its corruption, each party being very vigilant to hinder their adversaries from attempting any thing to its prejudice, in corrupting a book which they consider as common to them all.

I might observe many other advantages which accrue to the truth from these human failings; but I will only instance in one, which has always seemed to me very considerable; and that is, That these Heretics distinctly prove the truth of the predictions of our Saviour. An impious person would have reason to accuse our oracles as false, if there had never been any heresies. But truth triumphs in seeing so great a multitude of them, who the more they increase, the more she sees herself confirmed and established. This is the reason induced God to permit so great an increase in the first ages, when the truth, meeting with the greatest opposition by persecutions, stood in the greatest need of sensible characters by which it might be known.

I conclude this work with desiring my reader to consider these reflections upon the holy Scripture here propounded, with a serious attention, and to examine the coherence and indissoluble connexion of them; and with prayer to God that it may please him to make them serviceable to advance the glory of his name, which is the only end I have proposed to myself in the writing of them.

END OF VOLUME FIRST.



